

EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF MESOPOTAMIAN
LITERATURE:
HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS AGAINST EMPIRE

A Dissertation
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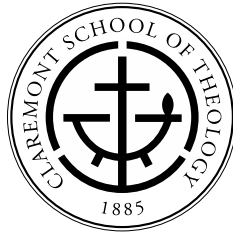
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Doctor of Philosophy

by
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ABSTRACT

Ezekiel's Prophecies under the Influence of Mesopotamian Literature:

Hidden Transcripts against Empire

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Scholars have long argued that Ezekiel, as a Pro-Babylonian, intentionally omits the oracle against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Indeed, YHWH commands Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon to destroy Jerusalem (Ezek 21:18–27 [MT 23–32]) and Israel's seven neighbors, in the Oracles Against the Nations (OAN; Ezek 25–32). Ezekiel thus never overtly criticizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire, even while he accentuates YHWH's kingship throughout the overall literary structure. This dissertation argues that the book of Ezekiel, written during the exile as resistance literature, uses the divine abandonment motifs and mythological elements to criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire. It will first explore how Ezekiel uses the divine abandonment motifs found in Mesopotamian literature. It will analyze the Tyrian oracles (Ezek 26:1–28:26) by employing form-criticism. Each section will interpret and analyze each oracle through the lens of postcolonial biblical criticism.

The so-called Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:26 are a good example of Ezekiel's resistance against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. First, in the Tyrian oracles, Ezekiel intentionally appropriates mythological elements such as “deep,” “many waters,” and “YHWH's east wind.” Such mythical elements symbolize YHWH's sovereignty over the world rather than Marduk's. YHWH's ultimate victory against chaos is far stronger than Marduk. Second, Ezek 26:1–28:26 highlights that YHWH has greater supremacy over other gods than does Marduk in the Babylonian akitu festival. The Babylonians required the participation of everyone in the

Babylonian New Year Festival. Ezekiel describes the festival by using encoded language. The ship of Tyre in the midst of the sea in Ezek 27 alludes to a processional ship of Marduk in the Babylonian Festival. The Tyrian king's excommunication in Ezek 28:11–19 also alludes to the Babylonian king's humiliation ritual in the festival. Israel's restoration by YHWH who is their king in Ezek 28:20–26 has affinity with Marduk's supremacy over other gods in the last part of the festival. David S. Vanderhooft suggests that the Neo-Babylonian Empire highlights two imperial strategies: Babylon as the center of the world, and Nebuchadnezzar as protector of humanity. This dissertation will argue that against their imperial strategy, by employing the Tyrian oracles, Ezekiel announces YHWH's temple as the center of the world and YHWH's kingship over other gods, even Marduk.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<i>ABD</i>	Anchor Bible Dictionary, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature</i>
<i>ANET</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts, Relating to the Old Testament</i> , 3 rd ed. with Supplement, ed. James B. Pritchard, 3 rd ed., with Supplement. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>BDB</i>	Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic</i> Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibOr</i>	<i>Biblica et orientalia</i>
<i>BCE</i>	Before the Common Era
<i>BMW</i>	Bible in the Modern World
<i>BSOAS</i>	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
<i>BZAW</i>	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CA</i>	Curse of Agade
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CLAM</i>	<i>The Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia</i>
<i>DDD</i>	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> , 2 nd rev., ed. Karel Van Der Toorn, et al. Leiden: Brill, 1999
<i>FAT</i>	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
<i>FOTL</i>	Form of the Old Testament Literature
<i>FRLANT</i>	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>GK</i>	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , ed. E. Kautzsch, rev. ed., Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1909
<i>HALOT</i>	L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon Of the Old Testament</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>JANES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>JSOTSup</i>	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>KTU</i>	D. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín, eds. <i>Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i>
<i>LE</i>	Eridu lament
<i>LN</i>	Nippur lament
<i>LSUr</i>	Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur
<i>LW</i>	Uruk lament

LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text, as represented by <i>Codex Leningradensis</i>
NIB	New Interpreter's Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OAN	Oracles against the Nations
OTL	Old Testament Library
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
SANE	Sources from the Ancient Near East
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SOTSMS	Society for Old Testament Studies Monograph Series
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problems and Previous Scholarship

Scholars have long examined the role of the book of Ezekiel in the development of apocalyptic literature. Based upon the deprivation theory, Paul D. Hanson has argued that the oppressed and disenfranchised groups within the early post-exilic community utilized the apocalyptic motifs to call into question the validity of existing structures by pointing out the incongruity between their apocalyptic viewpoints of a perfect realm and the actual state of reality.¹ In so doing, Hanson has insisted that the book of Ezekiel played a key role in officiating in the hierocratic tradition. In contrast to Hanson's deprivation theory, Stephen L. Cook has examined so-called proto-apocalyptic literature, Ezek 38–39, and insisted that hierarchic priests like millennial groups also present their own apocalypses.² Through the lens of socio-anthropological methodologies, Cook has argued that Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest envisioned his apocalyptic eschatology. Their arguments have shed light on the understanding of apocalyptic features in the book of Ezekiel in the context of the early post-exilic period.

Nevertheless, since they argued that apocalyptic features in the book of Ezekiel reflect the historical setting of early the post-exilic period rather than the Neo-Babylonian period, they overlooked how Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest uses early priestly traditions to highlight the sanctity of the Jerusalem Temple throughout Ezek 1–48 during the Babylonian Exile. Following Hartmut Gese's analysis, Walther Zimmerli insists that Ezek 40–48 reflects the Ezekiel school's redacted

¹ Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 231.

² Stephen L. Cook, *Prophecy & Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 1–2.

material in the post-exilic period.³ Most recent scholars such as Susan Niditch, Joseph Blenkinsopp, Paul D. Hanson, and Stephen L. Cook support Zimmerli's opinion.⁴ Thus, they insist that Zoroastrianism influenced apocalyptic features in the book of Ezekiel. Even Otto Plöger and Paul D. Hanson applied the sociological context of the Yehud community to the interpretation of the book of Ezekiel.⁵ However, I argue that in order to understand Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest, one should read the book of Ezekiel as a whole. As Moshe Greenberg analyzes the structure and theme in the book of Ezekiel, he recommends a holistic approach to the book of Ezekiel.⁶ Similarly, as Margaret Odell examines the influence of the Assyrian royal ideology on the book of Ezekiel, she suggests that the overall literary structure of Ezek 1–48 alludes to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon's inscription.⁷ Marvin Sweeney also insists that Ezekiel's chronological formulas and his commission throughout Ezek 1–48 prove Ezekiel to be a Zadokite priest.⁸ For example, in Ezek 1, the first chronological form "in the thirtieth year"

³ Walther Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*, trans. Ronald E. Clement, Hermeneia 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 41–52.

⁴ Susan Niditch, "Ezekiel 40–48 in a Visionary Context," *CBQ* 48 (1986): 208–224; Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 231; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 1–11; Cook, *Prophecy & Apocalypticism*, 1–2.

⁵ Otto Plöger, *Theocracy and Eschatology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968), 106–17; Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 231.

⁶ Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22 (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 21–37.

⁷ Margaret S. Odell, "Genre and Persona in Ezekiel 24:15–24," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 195–219; Odell, *Ezekiel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 34–37.

⁸ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2013), 1–19. See also Tyler D. Mayfield, *Literary Structure and Setting in Ezekiel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 101–4. According to Odell, Origen first suggested that the thirtieth year refers to Ezekiel's age. See Margaret S. Odell, "You Are What You Eat: Ezekiel and the Scroll," *JBL* 117 (1998): 229–48. James E. Miller also suggests that "the reference to the thirtieth year is part of a larger autobiographical structuring of the book in light of crucial moments in the life of a priest." See also James E. Miller, "the Thirtieth Year of Ezekiel 1:1," *RB* 99 (1992) 499–503.

indicates Ezekiel's age, thereby assuming his birth to be in the year that King Josiah's religious reforms began in 622 BCE. Ezekiel's seven-day period of seclusion for his first ordained priesthood in Ezek 3:15 involves the seven-day consecration ceremony for priesthood (c.f. Num 4; Lev 8). In Ezek 40:1, the last chronological form "in the twentieth year" symbolizes Ezekiel's retirement as a priest (Num 8). Thus, Marvin Sweeney argues that Ezekiel is deeply influenced by King Josiah's religious reforms.

Moreover, scholars who consider a late post-exilic composition of the book of Ezekiel also failed to explain why Ezekiel highlights YHWH's kingship throughout Ezek 1–48. Steven Shawn Tuell argues that Ezek 40–48 was composed during the reign of the Persian King Darius (522–486 BCE) because of their official administrative language.⁹ To prove his argument, Tuell examined the high priest in Egypt who wrote the legal documents for Egyptian priests and laypersons. Tuell assumes that Ezekiel's emphasis of separation between Zadokite priests as Jerusalemite priests and the Levites satisfied the Babylonian returnees in the Persian period. In a similar vein, as Kalinda R. Stevenson considers Ezek 40–48 in the context of the society of the post-exilic period, she insists that "the purpose of Ezek 40–48 is to restructure the society from a pre-exilic monarchy to a post-exilic temple society without a human king."¹⁰ However, since both of them paid attention to the context of post-exilic society, they ignored the fact that Ezekiel continuously emphasizes YHWH's kingship for the Judean exiles throughout Ezek 1–48.

More importantly, scholars have failed to explain why Ezekiel intentionally describes the divine presence through Mesopotamian traditions during the Babylonian Exile. Ezekiel portrays

⁹ Steven S. Tuell, *The Law of the Temple in Ezekiel 40–48* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 147–51.

¹⁰ Kalinda R. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 160.

the divine presence as the chariot throne vision which alludes to the Assyrian main god Assur's figure during the Babylonian Exile (Ezek 1:26; 10:1; and 43:7). As Moshe Greenberg refers to Mesopotamian iconography, he argues that the image of G-d as a rider in the sky with the clouds is closely related to Assur who rides the winged sun disk with a bow accompanying his army.¹¹ In a similar vein, in her commentary on Ezekiel, Margaret S. Odell argues that "Ezekiel adopts elements of Assyrian royal ideology, that is, claims about the universal sovereignty of Assyria's human kings."¹² Although both of them contributed to the understanding of Assyrian religious influence on the book of Ezekiel, they failed to examine why Ezekiel uses Assyrian royal images under the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Furthermore, they did not explain why Ezekiel uses similes to describe YHWH's presence, thereby expressing his strong aniconism.

The key questions I address are: 1) Why did Ezekiel appropriate Assyrian royal images during period of the Neo-Babylonian Empire?; 2) Why did Ezekiel emphasize YHWH's kingship during the Babylonian Exile in Ezek 1–48?; and 3) How does Ezekiel use his priestly traditions in his visions and oracles?

1.1.2. Thesis and Outline of Plan

My dissertation argues that Ezekiel as "resistance literature" intentionally uses Mesopotamian traditions as hidden transcripts to resist the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In Ezekiel's oracles against nations (Ezek 25–32), Ezekiel does not quote his judgment oracles against Babylon. As Paul Joyce points out, "Babylon, the great enemy of Israel in the age of Ezekiel, is

¹¹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 54.

¹² Odell, *Ezekiel*, 35.

not found among his oracles.”¹³ Thomas Renz even insists that Ezekiel’s positive attitude toward Babylon reflects his theological conviction that Babylon was YHWH’s instrument.¹⁴ More recently, Brian Neil Peterson argues that “the pro-Babylonian sentiments of Ezekiel are founded upon the premise that Babylon is Yahweh’s instrument of judgment against Judah.”¹⁵ However, both of them failed to consider how Ezekiel uses Mesopotamian traditions as hidden transcripts to resist the Babylonian Empire. In this respect, it is necessary to consider James C. Scott’s argument that the dominated produce hidden transcripts to criticize the dominant, while hiding behind anonymity.¹⁶ Anthea Portier-Young further developed Scott’s argument and insisted that “the pseudonymous authors of hidden transcripts proceed their resistant movement along with publics.”¹⁷ Unfortunately Portier-Young did not examine Ezekiel as “resistance literature,” since her primary texts are 1 Enoch and the book of Daniel which reflect the Hellenistic Empire of the Seleucids. It is evident that Ezekiel as “resistance literature” appropriated mythological traditions to resist empire: the Tyrian oracles (Ezek 26:1–28:26), the Egyptian oracles (Ezek 29:1–32:16) and the battle of Gog and Magog (Ezek 38–39).

Since Ezekiel dwelled at the banks of the river Chebar in Babylon (Ezek 1:1–3), he could not overtly criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire. However, Ezekiel as an educated Zadokite priest would have been familiar with Mesopotamian literature during his exile. We do not know

¹³ Paul Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 171.

¹⁴ Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 35.

¹⁵ Brian N. Peterson, *Ezekiel in Context: Ezekiel’s Message Understood in Its Historical Setting of Covenant Curses and Ancient Near Eastern Mythological Motifs* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 13.

¹⁶ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), xiii.

¹⁷ Anthea Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), xxii.

exactly how Ezekiel adopted Mesopotamian traditions in Babylonia.¹⁸ But recently, David S. Vanderhooft has argued that Ezekiel must have experienced “acculturation,” while he dwelled in proximity to Nippur during the sixth century.¹⁹ Jonathan Stökl also assumes that Ezekiel may have acquired access to special knowledge which “cuneiform schooling would have provided him.”²⁰ Although Vanderhooft does not consider Ezekiel’s critique against Babylon, he argues that “acculturation within the Babylonian milieu affords Ezekiel raw material to generate his critique.”²¹ By using Mesopotamian traditions, Ezekiel not only highlights YHWH’s kingship, but also resists the Neo-Babylonian Empire’s imperial strategy.

Accordingly, in chapter two, this study introduces form criticism, James C. Scott’s hidden transcripts, and postcolonial and biblical studies. Scott’s hidden transcripts is very helpful to better understand how the subjugated developed their resistance to empires in the Hebrew Bible. With regard to methodology, the approach in this study combines a form critical methodology with postcolonial biblical studies. This study will analyze biblical texts based upon a form critical methodology which highlights synchronic and diachronic approaches. Postcolonial biblical studies can offer a synchronic approach to interpret how Ezekiel and his exile community as the dominated brought resistance to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. The combination of these methodologies offers a fresh perspective when reading of the texts.

¹⁸ David M. Carr also argues that “it is unclear how the Jewish Diaspora would have access to written versions of the tradition, especially after the destruction of the Jerusalem palace-temple structure and the capture of its elite.” David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 168.

¹⁹ David S. Vanderhooft, “Ezekiel in and on Babylon,” in *Bible et Proche-Orient: Mélanges André Lemaire*, ed. J. M. Durand and J. Elayi, Transeuphratène 46 (Paris: Gabalda, 2014), 103.

²⁰ Jonathan Stökl, “A Youth without Blemish, Handsome, Proficient in All Wisdom, Knowledgeable and Intelligent: Ezekiel’s Access to Babylonian Culture,” in *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context*, ed. Caroline Waerzeggers and Jonathan Stökl, BZAW 478 (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 224.

²¹ Stökl, “Youth without Blemish,” 105.

In chapter three, this study examines the relationship between Sumerian literature and the book of Ezekiel. It examines the Curse of Agade (CA), the Cuthean legend, and five Sumerian city laments. I argue that during the period of exile in Babylon, Ezekiel appropriated Sumerian texts to highlight YHWH's kingship in the new temple. Sumerian scribes used the theme of divine presence and absence for their political propaganda to legitimate their current kingship, especially for Išme-Dagan, king of the Isin dynasty (1953–1935 BCE). Likewise, Ezekiel theologically offers the interpretation that YHWH abandoned His own people because of their sin. However, Ezekiel's viewpoint is not political propaganda for the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This study will examine how Ezekiel emphasizes YHWH's true kingship in the restored temple in Ezek 40–48.

In chapter four, this study examines the relationship between Akkadian literature and the book of Ezekiel. It examines the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, the Poem of Erra, and Esarhaddon's inscription. Assyrian scribes actively used the divine abandonment motif which symbolizes the weakness of Marduk for their political propaganda against Babylonians. I argue that Ezekiel intentionally appropriates the divine abandonment motif as his hidden transcript against Babylonians in order to highlight YHWH's kingship for the exile community. In particular, a close reading of Ezekiel texts indicates that Ezekiel intentionally appropriates the Assyrian royal ideology to criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire. For example, in Ezek 1:28, YHWH appears as the image of Assur: a deity who has two wings with feathers upon a brightening sun disk and also holds a bow with an arrow.

In chapter five, this study discusses the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:26. Because of limitations of space, the Egyptian oracles and the battle of Gog and Magog cannot be discussed in detail in this dissertation. In contrast to Ezekiel's small oracles against five nations, his oracles

against Tyre include a wide range of mythological texts, especially the *Chaoskampf* traditions beyond historical descriptions. Over the past few decades, scholars such as Lawrence Boadt, Christoph Auffarth, Bernard F. Batto, John B. Geyer, Paul E. Fitzpatrick, Margaret Odell, Carly L. Crouch, Casey A. Strine and Marvin A. Sweeney have recognized the value of mythological traditions in Tyre and Egypt.²² They have discovered that Ezekiel's mythopoeic viewpoint in the oracles against Tyre highlights YHWH as divine king and creator. A close reading of the Tyrian block of oracle reports in Ezek 26:1–28:26 reflects that Ezekiel uses mythological texts as hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

²² H. J. van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26, 1-28, 19): A New Approach*, Biblica et Orientalia 20 (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1968); Lawrence Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29–32* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980); Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies in Ezekiel's Oracles of Judgment," in *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation* (ed. Johan Lust; BETL 74; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 211–31; Christoph Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang: "Schöpfung" in Mythos Und Ritual Im Alten Orient Und in Griechenland Am Beispiel Der Odyssee Und Des Ezechielbuches* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 78–118; Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 153–67; Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 344; John B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles About the Nations*, SOTSMS (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 3–15, 39–74; Carly L. Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare," *JBL* 130 (2011): 473–92; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books: Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-Biblical Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 203–18; Carly L. Crouch and Casey A. Strine, "YHWH's Battle against Chaos in Ezekiel: The Transformation of Judahite Mythology for a New Situation," *JBL* 132 (2013): 883–903.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

This study will analyze biblical texts based upon a form critical methodology which highlights synchronic and diachronic approaches. At the outset, form critical scholars such as Hermann Gunkel and Sigmund Mowinckel focused on the short and self-contained units. Likewise, Walther Zimmerli's commentary on Ezekiel reflects his redactional concerns for Ezekiel. Zimmerli's comprehensive analysis deals with form, setting, and interpretation of texts, thereby influencing Ezekiel scholarship. However, with the rise of critical methodologies such as semiotics, linguistics, structuralism, rhetorical criticism, and Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of dialogism and of polyphonic texts, form critical concerns have changed. Rather than focusing on the study of original traditions and their social settings, scholars have begun to seek synchronic approaches to texts.²³ In particular, Rolf Knierim has contributed to the interpretation of the final form in both synchronic and diachronic dimensions. Based upon Knierim's suggestion, Marvin A. Sweeney attempts to analyze the final form in the prophetic literature. In his recent book, *Reading Ezekiel: A literary and Theological Commentary*, Sweeney analyzes the final form of the book of Ezekiel in both synchronic and diachronic dimensions.²⁴ This study follows form critical criteria in the Forms of Old Testament Literature (FOTL) series: (1) Structure (*Form*), (2) Genre (*Gattung*), (3) Setting (*Sitz im Leben*), and (4) Intention/Interpretation.²⁵

²³ Marvin A. Sweeney, "Form Criticism," in *To Each Its Own Meaning*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes, FOTL 21B (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 58–89.

²⁴ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 1–19.

²⁵ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 1–16.

Furthermore, this study will offer a post-colonial reading to interpret how Ezekiel and his exilic community as the dominated brought resistance to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. R. S. Sugirtharajah argues that “postcolonialism’s critical procedure is an amalgam of different methods ranging from the now unfashionable form criticism to contemporary literary methods.”²⁶ Although I disagree with his definition of form criticism as an unfashionable method, his attempts to integrate form criticism with postcolonialism reflect how postcolonialism can function as one of the literary methodological tools for readers. After World War II, form critical scholars have begun to seek synchronic methodologies to understand the final form of the text. In this respect, a postcolonial reading can offer a synchronic approach to the final form of the text. Since Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Homi Bhabha have developed postcolonial studies in the academic fields, biblical scholars such as R. S. Sugirtharajah, Fernando Segovia, Jeffrey Kah-Jin Kuan, Uriah Y. Kim, Steed Vernyl Davidson, and Jean-Pierre Ruiz have shed light on a postcolonial reading of biblical texts.²⁷ In an attempt to interpret biblical texts, they have searched for themes such as hybridity, oppression, assimilation, displacement and resistance. Especially, Jean-Pierren Ruiz interprets Ezekiel 20 in a postcolonial perspective as follows: “Reading the disputation speech in 20:30–44 as an expression of

²⁶ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 258.

²⁷ For discussion of the postcolonial criticism, see Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World*, 2001; Fernando F. Segovia, *A Postcolonial Commentary on the New Testament Writings, Bible and Postcolonialism* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007); Jeffrey Kah-Jin Kuan, “Diasporic Reading of a Diasporic Text: Identity Politics and Race Relations and the Book of Esther,” in *Interpreting Beyond Borders*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 166–67; Uriah Y. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005); Steed Vernyl Davidson, *Empire and Exile* (London: T & T Clark, 2012); Jean-Pierre Ruiz, “An Exile’s Baggage: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of Ezekiel,” ed. Jon L. Berquist (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 117–35; Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, “Ezekiel on Fanon’s Couch: A Postcolonialist Dialogue with David Halperin’s Seeking Ezekiel,” in *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace: Power and Theopolitics in the Bible: Essays in Honor of Millard Lind*, ed. Ted Grimsrud and Loren L. Johns (Telford, PA: Pandora, 1999), 108–44.

resistance, the call for a new exodus and a new settlement of the land of Israel acquires new significance as a minority discourse that rejects the mapping of the metropolis and the margins imposed on the Judeans by the Babylonian imperial ideology.”²⁸

Since the Neo-Babylonian imperial policy had forcibly displaced Ezekiel and his exile community from their homeland, Ezekiel’s community as one of the oppressed minorities resists imperial powers. When considering the historical setting of Ezekiel, it is clear that Babylonians carried away King Jehoiachin and leaders including Ezekiel to Babylon in 597 BCE (Ezek 1:1–3; cf. 2 Kings 24:12). Based upon archaeological discoveries such as the Weidner Chronicle, the Murashu tablets, the Elephantine papyri, and the al-Yahudu and Nasar tablets, scholars have admitted that Judean elites in Babylonia were able to maintain their social economic status under the Neo-Babylonian Empire. But the Neo-Babylonian Empire forcibly moved Ezekiel and his deportees into the Chebar River from their homeland. The process of displacement must have left deep scars on Ezekiel’s exile community. Therefore, although Ezekiel never apparently reveals his resistance to the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Ezekiel produces his own hidden transcripts.

2.3. Form Criticism: Marvin A. Sweeney

Form criticism is a method of linguistic textual analysis that may be applied both synchronically and diachronically to texts in either written or oral form.²⁹ Since the time that Hermann Gunkel suggested that biblical studies should examine the short, self-contained units of

²⁸ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 135.

²⁹ Sweeney, *Form Criticism*, 58.

texts, form criticism has changed. It not only explores the diachronic form of the text, but also examines the synchronic form of the text. Recently, in his book,³⁰ *Reading Prophetic Books*, Marvin Sweeney defines form criticism as follows:

Form-Criticism functions first synchronically to analyze the present literary form and communication of the present form of the text, without regard to its diachronic composition or settings, and then diachronically, based upon the synchronic analysis, to ascertain and examine the compositional history of the text in question in relation to its reconstructed written and oral stages. It works together with other critical methodologies, such as rhetorical criticism, redaction-criticism, tradition-historical criticism, textual criticism, narrative, plot, and character analysis, social-scientific criticism, linguistics, and intertextuality in the interpretation of biblical texts. Form-criticism is intimately concerned with the societal, historical, literary, and conceptual settings in which the biblical texts were produced, in which they function, and in which they are read.³¹

Sweeney's definition of form critical methodology is valuable. First, form criticism should first consider the final form of the text. Past Ezekielian scholars have relied too much on the diachronic approach to the book of Ezekiel. They have not considered the final form of the text. Walther Zimmerli comprehensively investigated the book of Ezekiel from the perspective of form critical methodology. Nevertheless, he often attempted to reconstruct the present text. For example, the final form of Ezek 28:12–19 reflects the irregular form of the Dirge 3/2 pattern. Thus, Zimmerli tried to find the original dirge or *Vorlage*.³² For this reason, Ronald M. Hals argues that “meter is after all a feature of Hebrew parallelism, in which the parts of the line or the

³⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 1–20.

³¹ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 2.

³² Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 89.

lines themselves exist in a kind of thought rhyme.”³³ As Sweeney points out, interpreters need to examine the final form of the text itself and then diachronically investigate its compositional history.

Second, form-criticism considers the societal setting, the literary setting, and the historical setting of the text. According to Sweeney’s definition of settings, “the societal setting (German, *Sitz im Leben*) in which language functions; the literary setting (German, *Sitz im Literatur*) or literary context in which the text functions; and the historical setting, including both the historical context in which the text is produced (German, *Sitz in der Historie*) and the historical context in which the text is presented (German, *Sitz in der Geschichte*).”³⁴ Especially, Sweeney underscores “intertextuality” to understand the literary context of a text.³⁵ Indeed, intertextuality helps readers or audiences to recognize the intent of the author. For example, Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest typically uses his priestly traditions. Thus, when Ezekiel portrays the Tyrian ship, he uses the Hebrew phrase כְּלִילַת יָפִי “perfected in beauty” (Ezek 27:3b, 11b), which was used for the building materials for the Jerusalem Temple in Ezek 16. In Ezek 16, Ezekiel highlights the image that Jerusalem as woman was perfected in beauty because her fame was bestowed as YHWH’s gift. But in the last part of Ezek 16, he announces that she will be punished because of her ignorance. Likewise, in Ezek 27, the Tyrian ship boast its beauty because of its builders. But in Ezek 27:26b, YHWH’s east wind destroys the Tyrian ship.

³³ Ronald M. Hals, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 199.

³⁴ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 3.

³⁵ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 3.

Third, form-criticism examines the macro-level of texts.³⁶ Hermann Gunkel typically examined short, self-contained literary units. However, his study ignored a larger structure of units. Rolf Knierim who challenged diachronic approaches attempted to analyze synchronic levels in texts using structural criticism.³⁷ Knierim insists that redaction criticism can function as a heuristic tool that enables readers to discover the typicality or the typicalities governing a text.³⁸ His analysis is influenced by Claude Lévi-Strauss who aimed at discovering the fundamental patterns of the human mind that underlie its overwhelming diversity of expression.³⁹ Following his argument, Knierim wants to identify structures that underlie all forms of human expression and behavior. For example, a psalm can follow a rhetorical pattern — acrostic, strophe, verse — and at the same time the typical structure of a traditional theme or a liturgical event.⁴⁰ Thus, Knierim’s primary question for a text asks how these structural types interact. Ezekielian scholars have also considered the macro-level of texts. But based upon systematic Christian theology, they have generally argued that the literary form of the book of Ezekiel is comprised of three major sections: 1) Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment against Israel (Ezek 1–24); 2) Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment against the nations (Ezek 25–32); and 3) Ezekiel’s oracles of restoration for Israel and the nations of the world (Ezek 33–48).⁴¹ However, according to Sweeney’s formal analysis, the sequence of chronological statements (Ezek 1:1–3; 8:1; 20:1;

³⁶ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 4–5.

³⁷ Rolf Knierim, “Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered,” *Int* 27 (1973): 435–68.

³⁸ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 445.

³⁹ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 439.

⁴⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 460.

⁴¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 3–5; Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles*, 7–8; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 107–12; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 3–12.

24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 29:17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; 32:17; 33:21; and 40:1) identifies and introduces “the units that constitute the formal literary structure of the book of Ezekiel from Ezekiel’s thirtieth until his fiftieth year.”⁴² His structural analysis of the book of Ezekiel is a helpful tool for understanding the structure of the Tyrian oracles (Ezek 26:1–28:26). Previous biblical scholars have only examined Ezek 26:1–28:19. But following his macro-level study of the Tyrian oracles, the prophetic pronouncements concerning Tyre and Sidon and the restoration of Jacob in Ezek 26:1-28:26 are clearly demarcated by chronological formulae (Ezek 26:1, 29:1).

Fourth, form-criticism requires a full understanding of the semantic and syntactical dimensions of biblical Hebrew, Koine Greek, biblical or Targumic Aramaic, Syrian, Latin, etc., in order to enable the interpreter to grasp the means by which a text organizes and presents its contents and communication.⁴³ Arie Van Der Kooij examines a translator’s theological interpretation of a text.⁴⁴ When he compares the Septuagint of Isaiah 23 with the MT (the oracle of Tyre), he demonstrates that there are significant differences between them.⁴⁵ In contrast to the MT which is about the destruction of Tyre, the LXX refers to the destruction of Carthage with its serious consequences for Tyre. Since the LXX of Isaiah 23 reflects the Hellenistic period, the destruction of Carthage is involved with the complete destruction of Carthage by the Romans in 146 BCE. He regards this interpretation as a translator’s reapplication of ancient prophecy. Just as the author of the Book of Daniel and the Qumran community attempted to interpret their scripture in the context of their time, so the LXX Isa. 23 reinterprets the oracle of Tyre. In the

⁴² Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 4–9.

⁴³ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 3.

⁴⁴ Arie van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

⁴⁵ Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 2–19.

Tyrian oracles (26:1–28:26), it is also observed different translations of *Vorlage*. For example, the MT reading of Ezek 28:14a prefers to identify the Tyrian king with a cherub. By contrast, the LXX reading of Ezek 28:14a indicates that the Tyrian king as the primeval man with a cherub, which echoes the Garden of Eden in Gen 2–3. Furthermore, the MT reading of Ezek 28:13 names that the nine precious stones that were the Tyrian king’s covering. But the LXX reading of Ezek 28:13 mentions the twelve stones, which refer to the twelve stones of the breastplate for the high priest (Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13).

Finally, form-criticism examines the rhetorical function of a text. Since James Muilenburg delivered his presidential address entitled “Form Criticism and Beyond” to the Society of Biblical Literature, in December 1968, rhetorical criticism has been increasingly developed.⁴⁶ According to Muilenburg’s assignment for the rhetorical critic, there are two tasks to the interpretation of a text.⁴⁷ The first task is to define the limits of a literary unit by using the criteria of form and content. Devices such as climax, *inclusio*, and chiasm set the boundaries. The second task is to discern structure: to delineate overall design and individual parts, show how they work together, identify literary devices and explicate their occurrences testify to its emphatic and deictic functions.⁴⁸ Following Muilenburg’s agenda, Phyllis Tribble introduces rhetorical criticism but further extends her methodology with new literary viewpoints. Rather than focusing on the authorial intent, she wants to interpret the final form of a text as it now appears.⁴⁹ She describes such analysis as synchronic analysis, not diachronic. Above all, the

⁴⁶ Phyllis Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 29.

⁴⁷ Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 27.

⁴⁸ Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 27–8.

⁴⁹ Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 101.

fundamental question of the rhetorical question is “how does it relate to and address its audience?”⁵⁰ For example, in Ezek 28:2, the Tyrian prince boasts of his self-deification, “I am a god (אֱלֹהִים).” But in Ezek 28:9, by introducing the rhetorical question “will you say, I am a god (אֱלֹהִים)?,” Ezekiel negates the hubris of the Tyrian king.

2.3. Hidden Transcripts

In his book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, political scientist James C. Scott offers the dynamic relationship between “the public transcript” and “the hidden transcript” in order to understand how subordinated people resist the dominant.⁵¹ Although Scott’s analysis is based upon his strenuous examination of Malaysian villages rather than ancient Near Eastern societies, hidden transcripts by the dominated groups in the offstage behind the dominant are helpful tools to understand better how the subjugated in disguise developed their resistance to empires in the Hebrew Bible. So far, a wide range of New Testament scholars have studied Scott’s hidden transcripts to examine studies of Jesus movements, Q and Paul’s teachings.⁵² In contrast, a few Hebrew Bible scholars have applied Scott’s idea of hidden transcripts to their studies.⁵³ Building upon Scott’s theory, Anatheia E. Portier-Young has further argued that

⁵⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 3.

⁵¹ Scott, *Domination*, ix–xiii.

⁵² Richard A Horsley, ed., *Hidden Transcripts and the Arts of Resistance : Applying the Work of James C. Scott to Jesus and Paul* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004); Richard A Horsley, ed., *Oral Performance, Popular Tradition, and Hidden Transcript in Q* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006); Amanda C. Miller, *Rumors of Resistance: Status Reversals and Hidden Transcripts in the Gospel of Luke* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014); Christoph Heilig, *Hidden Criticism?: The Methodology and Plausibility of the Search for a Counter-Imperial Subtext in Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

⁵³ Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*; C. A. Strine, *Sworn Enemies: The Divine Oath, the Book of Ezekiel, and the Polemics of Exile* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013); C. A. Strine, “Chaoskampf against Empire: YHWH’s Battle against Gog (Ezekiel 38-39) as Resistance Literature,” in *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, ed. Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 87–108.

apocalyptic writers counter imperial hegemony by exposing their hidden transcripts rather than hiding in the off stage.⁵⁴ More recently, Casey A. Strine has examined the hidden transcripts as counter-texts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire's ideological hegemony in the book of Ezekiel.⁵⁵ Although Strine first comprehensively analyzed hidden transcripts as *Kulturkampf* against Enuma Elish, he did not further examine why Ezekiel intentionally mimics the Neo-Assyrian royal ideological propaganda to criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire. We will discuss Ezekiel's hybridity and mimics in the next section. In this section, I will examine James C. Scott's public transcripts as imperial ideological texts and hidden transcripts as counter-texts against empires. Since elites continuously produce their public transcripts to justify their domination of the subordinate groups, Scott's public transcript resembles empires' political propaganda to legitimate their kingship. Scott notes that "the deception — or propaganda — they devise may add padding to their stature but it will also hide whatever might detract from their grandeur and authority."⁵⁶ Scott's hidden transcripts help us to understand how Ezekiel indirectly criticized the Neo-Babylonian Empire for his exile community rather than directly criticizing it.

The dominant elites devised their own public transcripts to maintain their imperial hegemony. James C. Scott explains that "in ideological terms the public transcript will typically, by its accommodationist tone, provide convincing evidence for the hegemony of dominant values, for the hegemony of dominant discourse."⁵⁷ For Scott, the dominant elites intentionally designed the public transcript "to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize" their power, whereas

⁵⁴ Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire*, 31–45.

⁵⁵ Strine, *Sworn Enemies*; Strine, "Chaoskampf against Empire," 87–108.

⁵⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 50.

⁵⁷ Scott, *Domination*, 4.

they conceal “the dirty linen of their rule.”⁵⁸ Of particular importance are empires’ political works to dominate subordinate groups: “affirmation, concealment, euphemization and stigmatization, and the appearance of unanimity.”⁵⁹ To vindicate their conquest, elites planned ceremonies, in which they reveal their hierarchy and power before the dominated.⁶⁰ Elites also use euphemism which plays a role “in masking the many nasty facts of domination.”⁶¹ In the case of stigmatization, they stigmatize activities of the conquered, when the conquered showed their resistance to their empires: “rebels or revolutionaries are labeled bandits, criminals, and hooligans.”⁶² Finally, through the public transcript, they create unanimity in which they make the conquered reveal their remorse and apologies. For Scott, those political works can be culminated in “parades, inaugurations, processions, coronations, and funerals.”⁶³ For example, the Neo-Babylonian emperors praised their main deity Marduk before their citizens and conquered people in the *akitu* festival in order to accentuate their imperial power. With regard to the function of rituals, Scott argues that “ritual subservience reliably extracted from inferiors signals quite literally that there is no realistic choice other than compliance.”⁶⁴

Scott also categorizes the development of public transcripts with three domains: Material Domination, Status Domination, and Ideological Domination.⁶⁵ In the first domain, “Material

⁵⁸ Scott, *Domination*, 18.

⁵⁹ Scott, *Domination*, 45.

⁶⁰ Scott, *Domination*, 46.

⁶¹ Scott, *Domination*, 53.

⁶² Scott, *Domination*, 55.

⁶³ Scott, *Domination*, 58.

⁶⁴ Scott, *Domination*, 66.

⁶⁵ Scott, *Domination*, 198.

Domination,” the primary purpose of empires is to appropriate grain, taxes, and labor from the conquered.⁶⁶ For example, when the Neo-Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE) invaded Syria-Palestine, the main purpose of his campaign was to appropriate olive oil, grain, and water.⁶⁷ The second domain of the public transcript is “Status Domination.” The dominant use “humiliation, disprivilege, insults, assaults on dignity” before the public.⁶⁸ Indeed, empires humiliate the conquered through mass deportation. According to Marvin A. Sweeney, “the Assyrians have forced male captives to go without clothing as a means to humiliate and control them.”⁶⁹ In addition to physical humiliation, Assyrian kings despoiled statues of their conquered people in the city, Assur.⁷⁰ The conquered not only lost their previous privilege in their country, but also experienced humiliation by their captors. The last domain of the public transcript is “Ideological Domination.” With regard to “Ideological Domination,” Scott suggests that it is the public religious and political world view of the dominant elite.⁷¹ As we will discuss in chapter three and four, Sumerian city laments accentuate the role of a king for the return of their patron deities in the restored temple for the legitimacy of Isin dynasty (2017 – 1985 BCE). Similarly, in order to vindicate their kingship and justify their attack on Babylon, Assyrian scribes wrote inscriptions, such as the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Marduk’s Ordeal, and Esarhaddon’s autobiographical apology.

⁶⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 198.

⁶⁷ Angelika Berlejung, “The Assyrians in the West: Assyrianization, Colonialism, Indifference, or Development Policy?,” in *Congress Volume: Helsinki, 2010*, ed. Martti Nissinen, VTSup 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 21–60.

⁶⁸ Berlejung, “Assyrians in the West,” 198.

⁶⁹ Marvin A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets*, Vol. 2, Berit Olam (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), 443.

⁷⁰ Mordechai Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 9–41.

⁷¹ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 111.

By contrast, the dominated use their hidden transcripts offstage to criticize the dominant. In his previous book, *Weapons of the Weak*, Scott examined why “the poor of Sedaka in Malaysia nearly always adopt a protective disguise in their relations with more powerful villagers or outsiders.”⁷² He found that “throughout the daily encounters with landlords, the peasantry carefully adopted a public mask of deference” but spoke unedited transcripts against their lords in the slave quarters or their house.⁷³ He defined their unedited transcripts as “the art of dissimulation.”⁷⁴ In his book, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Scott redefines them as “hidden transcripts” in the following way:

Every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a “hidden transcript” that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant. The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. A comparison of the hidden transcript of the weak with that of the powerful and of *both* hidden transcripts to the public transcript of power relations offers a substantially new way of understanding resistance of domination.⁷⁵

For Scott, subordinate groups, “through gesture, speech, practices,” produce their hidden transcript to react “back on the public transcript by engendering a subculture and by opposing its own variant form of social domination against that of the dominant elite.”⁷⁶ While subordinates appear deferential in public, they also tactfully disguise their intentions offstage.⁷⁷ Then, how do

⁷² James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 284.

⁷³ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 285–89.

⁷⁴ Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, 285.

⁷⁵ Scott, *Domination*, xii.

⁷⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 27.

⁷⁷ Scott, *Domination*, 33.

subordinates communicate with each other? Scott argues that “the subordinate group must carve out for itself social spaces insulated from control and surveillance.”⁷⁸ For example, the subordinates share their hidden transcripts in the alehouse, the pub, tavern, the inn, the cabaret, the beer cellar, the gin mill, the coffeehouse and club-room.⁷⁹ Ezekiel and his community worked as a *corvée* in Tel-abib by the Chebar River as a canal in Babylon “within the commercial orbit of Nippur” (cf. Ezek 1:3; 3:15).⁸⁰ Presumably, just as the Neo-Assyrian Empire managed the Babylonians in Nippur through their military garrison,⁸¹ the Neo-Babylonian Empire strictly monitored Ezekiel and his community. To avoid the surveillance of the Babylonians, Ezekiel and his community needed their private place. Thus, we observe that elders regularly appear at the house of Ezekiel (cf. 8:1; 14:1; and 20:1).

Against the public transcripts, subordinated people produce their “cooked” hidden transcripts as *infra-politics* in such sequestered places. Like the three domains of the public transcript, Scott also categorizes three domains of hidden transcript: Material Domination, Status Domination, and Ideological Domination.⁸² In the first domain, “Material Domination,” subordinate people use “raw” hidden transcript: “poaching, foot-dragging, pilfering, dissimulation, flight.”⁸³ In the second domain, “Status Domination,” subjugated peoples develop

⁷⁸ Scott, *Domination*, 118.

⁷⁹ Scott, *Domination*, 121–22.

⁸⁰ Andrew Mein, *Ezekiel and the Ethics of Exile* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 62. Henry O. Thompson assumes that the Chebar as a canal began at “the Euphrates River north of Babylon and flowed 60 miles southeast through the vicinity of ancient Nippur, rejoining the Euphrates south of Warka.” Henry O. Thompson, “Chebar,” *ABD* 1:893.

⁸¹ Dale F. Launderville, *Spirit and Reason: The Embodied Character of Ezekiel’s Symbolic Thinking* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007), 55.

⁸² Scott, *Domination*, 198.

⁸³ Scott, *Domination*, xiii.

their hidden transcript in response to “humiliation, disprivilege, insults, assaults on dignity”: “rituals of aggression, tales of revenge, use of carnival symbolism, gossip, rumor, creation of autonomous social space for assertion of dignity.”⁸⁴ As Scott borrows the terms of Lévi-Strauss, he distinguishes “between public declarations of defiance that are relatively ‘raw’ and those that are relatively ‘cooked.’”⁸⁵ For Scott, “a public humiliation can be fully reciprocated only with a public revenge.”⁸⁶ But since subjugated peoples cannot directly humiliate the dominant, they develop secret rites of revenge as “cooked” hidden transcript offstage. For example, in Carnival, “actual rebels dress as women or mask themselves when breaking machinery or making political demands.”⁸⁷ The third domain of hidden transcripts against “Ideological Domination” would be the most nuanced and elaborate “cooked” transcripts. To illustrate this, Scott introduces the concept of “world-upside-down imagery.” In response to “a dominant transcript of hierarchy and deference,” subjugated people produce world-upside-down prints as the counterculture.⁸⁸ Scott gives examples to illustrate such symbolic inversions which oppose the normal relations and hierarchies as follows:

Mice ate cats, children spanked parents, the hare snared the hunter, the cart pulled the horse, fishermen were pulled from the water by fish, the wife beat the husband, the ox slaughtered the butcher, the poor man gave alms to the rich man, the goose put the cook

⁸⁴ Scott, *Domination*, 198.

⁸⁵ Scott, *Domination*, 216.

⁸⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 215.

⁸⁷ Scott, *Domination*, 181.

⁸⁸ Scott, *Domination*, 172.

into the pot, the king on foot led a peasant on horseback, fish flew in the air, and so on in seemingly endless profusion.⁸⁹

Thus, Scott views such a political struggle between the hidden and public transcripts as *infrapolitics*.⁹⁰ Since all open political activities by the subjugated are precluded, they produce their hidden transcripts within “the informal networks of kin, neighbors, friends, and community rather than formal organization.”⁹¹ As Richard Horsley called attention to Scott’s “well-cooked” hidden transcripts in the sequestered sites, he argued that “the sequestered sites are little centers of localized power in their own right.”⁹² From this perspective, Horsley explored the village communities where Jesus taught in the Gospel of Mark.⁹³ In the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel also produces “well-cooked” hidden transcripts within his exile community. Although Ezekiel does not directly criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire, he underscores the fact that YHWH as a true king controls the Neo-Babylonian king (cf. Ezek 26:7; 29:19; 30:10, 24, 25; and 32:11). As we will discuss in chapter five, Ezekiel’s community as a subordinated group produces their own hidden transcripts as *kulturkampf* against the Neo-Babylonian Empire.⁹⁴

Finally, in “the highly charged atmosphere,” hidden transcripts can be further announced as the act of defiance rather than simply limited to the sequestered sites.⁹⁵ Scott notes:

⁸⁹ Scott, *Domination*, 167.

⁹⁰ Scott, *Domination*, 183–201.

⁹¹ Scott, *Domination*, 200.

⁹² Horsley, *Hidden Transcripts*, 11.

⁹³ Horsley, *Hidden Transcripts*, 61–80.

⁹⁴ Scott also argues that “Subordinate groups do their own patrolling in this *kulturkampf*, singling out anyone who puts on airs, who denies his origins, who seems aloof, who attempts to hobnob with elites.” See Scott, *Domination*, 130, 135.

⁹⁵ Scott, *Domination*, 222.

It is only when this hidden transcript is openly declared that subordinates can fully recognize the full extent to which their claims, their dreams, their anger is shared by other subordinates with whom they have not been in direct touch.⁹⁶

Scott realizes that such a breakthrough event rarely occurs. Regarding this breakthrough event, Richard Horsley suggests that “Jesus’ bold confrontation with the Jerusalem rulers became the crucial moment of ‘breakthrough’ to historical significance for the movement he was leading.”⁹⁷ For Horsley, “Jesus was not only the new Moses or Elijah but the new Amos or Jeremiah who dared march directly into the temple courtyard and pronounce God’s condemnation.”⁹⁸ In the case of the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel does not overtly confront the Babylonians. Even Ezekiel does not appear as a martyr against them. Nevertheless, we can observe that Ezekiel appears as the New Moses or Elijah in his visions. Ezekiel’s visions frequently echo the prophet Elijah since Ezekiel’s traditions are heavily involved in the pre-classical prophetic traditions, particularly Elijah and Elisha narratives. Keith W. Carley portrayed how Elijah and Elisha’s narratives, especially “the hand of YHWH” influenced Ezekiel’s work (Ezek 1:3; 3:22; 8:1; 37:1; and 40:1).⁹⁹ Moreover, in Ezek 40–48 Ezekiel appears as the new Moses. Risa Levitt Kohn argues that “Ezek 40–48 is the only body of legislation in the Hebrew Bible not placed in the mouth of Moses.”¹⁰⁰ Then, she asserts that “Moses receives a design of the tabernacle in P; similarly

⁹⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 221–24.

⁹⁷ Horsley, *Hidden Transcripts*, 24.

⁹⁸ Horsley, *Hidden Transcripts*, 79.

⁹⁹ Keith W. Carley, *Ezekiel among the Prophets: A Study of Ezekiel’s Place in Prophetic Tradition* (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1974), 62–66.

¹⁰⁰ Risa Levitt Kohn, “With a Mighty Hand and an Outstretched Arm: The Prophet and the Torah in Ezekiel 20,” in *Ezekiel’s Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality* (ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 166.

Ezekiel receives a detailed vision of the new Temple.”¹⁰¹ In my view, although Ezekiel never directly criticizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire, his teachings are highly “well-cooked” hidden transcripts against it. Ezekiel’s primary purpose of hidden transcript for his exile community is to announce YHWH’s kingship in the new Temple: “YHWH is a true king. Thus, no other gods or even Marduk can stay in the new Temple except YHWH!”

2.4. Postcolonial Studies and Biblical Studies

Over the past decades, postcolonial studies have developed through the work of such theorists as Edward Said,¹⁰² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak¹⁰³, and Homi Bhabha.¹⁰⁴ Biblical scholars have vigorously applied their theories to their biblical studies, especially for an understanding the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized.¹⁰⁵ With regard to the definition of Postcolonialism, Fernando F. Segovia notes:

¹⁰¹ Kohn, “With a Mighty Hand,” 166.

¹⁰² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

¹⁰³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (New York: Routledge, 1996); Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 21–78.

¹⁰⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁰⁵ For a discussion of Postcolonial Studies and Biblical Studies, see Daniel Smith-Christopher, “Ezekiel on Fanon’s Couch: A Postcolonialist Dialogue with David Halperin’s *Seeking Ezekiel*,” in *Peace and Justice Shall Embrace, Power and Theopolitics in the Bible: Essays in Honor of Millard Lind* (eds. Ted Grimsrud, and Loren L. Johns; Telford, PA: Pandora, 1999), 108–44; *Interpreting beyond borders*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*; R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (Malden, MA ; Oxford: Blackwell Pub, 2006); Jean-Pierre Ruiz, “An Exile’s Baggage: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of Ezekiel,” in *Approaching Yehud: New Approaches to the Study of the Persian Period*, ed. Jon L. Berquist (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 117–35 ; Gale A. Yee, “Postcolonial Biblical Criticism,” in *Methods for Exodus*, ed. Thomas B. Dozeman (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 193–233; Davidson, *Empire and Exile*; Leo G. Perdue, *Israel and Empire: A Postcolonial History of Israel and Early Judaism* (London: T & T Clark, 2015).

I take the by now common designation of ‘Postcolonial Studies’ to signify the study of the realm of the geopolitical—the relationship between center and margins, metropolis and periphery, on a global political scale: the imperial and the colonial. Such a relationship I further see as encompassing both social and cultural ‘reality’ —social formation and cultural production; consequently, I see the study in question as multidimensional, multiperspectival and multidisciplinary—a task best captured by the use of the plural ‘studies’, that is, a congeries of studies with a common focus on the geopolitical. This understanding of the field yields, to be sure, a quite extensive vision of its disciplinary range, the parameters of which may be circumscribed from a number of different angles.¹⁰⁶

Instead of simply depicting imperial hegemony, postcolonial studies examine how the subordinate respond to imperial culture and rule. Thus, Edward Said argues that “imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” but “colonialism, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory.”¹⁰⁷ As Gale A. Yee points out, since biblical authors produced their texts under the influence of empires such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome, postcolonial biblical criticism analyzes “the factors of economic and cultural expansion, domination, and exploitation as major forces in the production of the biblical texts under the colonial rule of different empires in antiquity.”¹⁰⁸ In this section, I will first briefly examine postcolonial theorists’ works. In particular, I will explore Homi Bhabha’s important ideas such as stereotypes, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. Then, I will explore how postcolonial biblical scholars apply postcolonial theories to their biblical studies.

¹⁰⁶ Fernando F. Segovia, “Interpreting beyond Borders: Postcolonial Studies and Diasporic Studies in Biblical Criticism,” in *Interpreting Beyond Borders*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 11–12.

¹⁰⁷ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 9.

¹⁰⁸ Gale A. Yee, “Postcolonial Biblical Criticism,” 195.

2.4.1. Edward W. Said

Postcolonial theories not only explore the discourses of imperial powers, but also discover counter-discourses of the colonials. In his book, *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said argues that “the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West.”¹⁰⁹ As Said follows Antonio Gramsci’s argument that “certain cultural forms predominate over others,” he suggests that the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient reflects “European Superiority over Oriental backwardness.”¹¹⁰ Thus, Said attempted to illustrate the imperial power of Western cultural discourse and the formidable structure of cultural domination for formerly colonized peoples.¹¹¹ Accordingly, for Said, the primary task of the culture of resistance to empires is “to reclaim, rename, and reinhabit the land” or “to search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history, for a new pantheon of heroes and (occasionally) heroines, myths, and religions.”¹¹² For example, instead of assimilation into the Neo-Babylonian religious practices, Ezekiel criticizes their idolatrous religious practices as abominations and detestable things in the temple of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek 8). Rather, Ezekiel highlights the Torah for his exile community in Ezekiel 20.

2.4.2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

¹⁰⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 5.

¹¹⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

¹¹¹ Said, *Orientalism*, 25.

¹¹² Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 226.

Similarly, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak further developed Said's critique of imperial power. While Said primarily studied the Middle East and its relationship with the West, Spivak's major concern was the subaltern groups such as peasants and women in Indian society. In particular, she has been concerned about "the super-exploitation of Third World female labor."¹¹³ In her essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Spivak examined the voice of the subaltern groups, especially voices of colonized women in colonized texts.¹¹⁴ Building upon Jacques Derrida's argument that the voice of the native informant, the Other, is limited in the imperialist constitution of the colonial subject,¹¹⁵ her answer is clear: "One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice consciousness."¹¹⁶ This perspective considerably influenced feminist biblical scholars. Pui-lan Kwok who offers an Asian feminist biblical hermeneutics underscores Spivak's achievement as follows:

Spivak challenges postcolonial intellectuals to regard our privilege as our loss. Because of our relatively affluent position and education, we do not have the life experience and perspectives of those less fortunate. Therefore, though with good intention, we may not be able to see the world from the underside of history. Such an honest admission of our privileged location and our limited epistemological vision does not undermine our work, but it does qualify it and reminds us to listen to the voices of those who are less privileged and those whom we have the potential to oppress.¹¹⁷

2.4.3. Homi K. Bhabha

¹¹³ Spivak, *Spivak Reader*, 5.

¹¹⁴ Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 21–78.

¹¹⁵ Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 46.

¹¹⁶ Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 50.

¹¹⁷ Pui-lan Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 75–76.

Although Homi K. Bhabha is also influenced by Said's argument, he questions Said's binary division of the West and the Orient. For Bhabha, "cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other."¹¹⁸ Building upon Frantz Fanon's psychoanalytic approach to colonialism in *Black Skin, White Mask*, in which "the black soul is a white man's artifact,"¹¹⁹ Bhabha suggests *the liminal problem* of colonial identity. The colonizer produces their colonial discourses in order to strengthen their domination over the colonized. In this circumstance, resistance to the colonial discourses may arise among the colonized. But at the same time, they also hope to resemble their colonizers. This conflict leads to Bhabha's four major concepts: stereotypes, ambivalence, mimicry, and hybridity. For Bhabha, "the stereotype, as the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both colonizer and colonized, is the scene of a similar fantasy and defense."¹²⁰ By producing stereotypes, the colonizers emphasize that they are superior to the colonized. However, they also confront the ambivalence of the colonized, which threaten their colonial authority.

This ambivalence results in the hybridity and mimicry of the colonized. For Bhabha, "mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance."¹²¹ Although the colonized exaggeratedly copy language, culture, manners, and ideas of the colonizers, their exaggeration is meant to be a form of mockery.¹²² Bhabha explains the effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse as follows:

¹¹⁸ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 52.

¹¹⁹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 63.

¹²⁰ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 107.

¹²¹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 128.

¹²² David Huddart, *Homi K. Bhabha*, Routledge Critical Thinkers (London; New York: Routledge, 2006),

It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the ambivalence of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not merely ‘rupture’ the discourse but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a ‘partial’ presence. By ‘partial’ I mean both ‘incomplete’ and ‘virtual’. It is as if the very emergence of the ‘colonial’ is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition within the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace.

When prophets criticize empires in the prophetic literature, they often use imperial propaganda. For example, as Peter Machinist points out, since “Judeans like Isaiah would have been exposed to it,” Isaiah use Assyrian propaganda to criticize the Neo-Assyrian Empire.¹²³ According to the Assyrian royal inscription, from the command of their god Assur, Assyrian rulers put their yoke on their subjects.¹²⁴ When Isaiah depicts YHWH’s judgment against the Assyrian rulers in Isa 14:25, he describes “his yoke shall depart from them [Israel].” While Isaiah mimics Assyrian propaganda as the colonial discourse or stereotype by Assyrians, he also mocks it to criticize Assyrians.

In addition to stereotypes, ambivalence, mimicry, Bhabha stresses the concept of hybridity that challenges the boundary between the colonizer and the colonized. For Bhabha, the

¹²³ Peter Machinist, “Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah,” *JAOS* 103 (1983): 730.

¹²⁴ Machinist, “Assyria,” 734.

distinction between the identities and cultures of the colonizer and the colonized are never quite pure.¹²⁵ Bhabha notes:

The margin of hybridity, where cultural differences ‘contingently’ and conflictually touch, becomes the moment of panic which reveals the borderline experience. It resists the binary opposition of racial and cultural groups, sipahis and sahibs, as homogeneous polarized political consciousnesses.¹²⁶

As David Huddart analyzes Bhabha’s hybridity, he argues that “hybridity refers to the fact that cultures are not discrete phenomena; instead, they are always in contact with one another, and this contact leads to cultural mixed-ness.”¹²⁷ Thus, Bhabha leads us to consider “the Third Space of enunciation,” which makes “the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process.”¹²⁸ Instead of “a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past,”¹²⁹ the colonized experience “in-between cultures” or “the liminal, meaning that which is on the border or the threshold.”¹³⁰ It is through hybridity and liminality of the Third Space as resistance that the colonized can challenge the stereotypes created by the colonizer. For example, Bhabha’s ideas help us to understand Ezekiel as a mimic man who reveals his hybridity: a Zadokite priest who was acculturated into Babylonian society.¹³¹ Ezekiel imitates the culture of the Neo-Babylonian

¹²⁵ Gale A. Yee, “Postcolonial Biblical Criticism,” 200.

¹²⁶ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 296.

¹²⁷ Huddart, *Bhabha*, 4.

¹²⁸ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 54.

¹²⁹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 54.

¹³⁰ Huddart, *Bhabha*, 4.

¹³¹ Vanderhooft evaluated several acculturation strategies that appear in Ezekiel. He argues that “while the prophet may not reflect self-consciously on the particular mechanisms of Babylonian imperial rule, he did adopt significant elements of the Babylonian cultural repertoire for the purpose not of criticizing the dominant culture, but

Empire, which is “mimicry —*almost the same but not quite*.”¹³² On the surface, Ezekiel’s mimicry seems not to be resistant to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. However, as Bhabha emphasizes, it menaces “the narcissistic demand of colonial authority.”¹³³

2.4.4. R. S. Sugirtharajah

Building upon postcolonial theories, postcolonial biblical scholars have explored biblical texts, especially to understand the deported communities in the diaspora. In his book, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation*, R. S. Sugirtharajah emphasizes that biblical interpretation needs to work with postcolonialism.¹³⁴ For Sugirtharajah, biblical scholarship has shown “a remarkable unwillingness to mention imperialism as shaping the contours of biblical scholarship.”¹³⁵ Thus, he stresses that postcolonial criticism enables biblical scholarship “to extend its scope to include issues of domination, Western expansion, and its ideological manifestations, as central forces in defining biblical scholarship.”¹³⁶ In particular, in the last chapter “Hermeneutics in Transit: Diaspora and Interpretation,” Sugirtharajah takes into consideration “the problems and possibilities of crossing borders, transgressing boundaries, exile, return, immigration and migrancy, deterritorialization, inhabiting in-between spaces under

for criticizing his own Judean community.” Although I disagree with his argument, his social scientific research on the phenomenon of acculturation in Ezekiel is valuable. See Vanderhooft, “Ezekiel in and on Babylon,” 99–119.

¹³² Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 127.

¹³³ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 126.

¹³⁴ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 25.

¹³⁵ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 25.

¹³⁶ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 74.

the rubric of diaspora.”¹³⁷ Regarding the effect of diaspora, from a postcolonial perspective, Sugirtharajah applies Bhabha’s hybridity concept to diasporic hermeneutics:

Diasporic existence and current globalization have demonstrated that people are no longer one thing or another.... The postcolonial notion of hybridity is not about the dissolution of differences but about renegotiating the structure of power built on differences. It is not synonymous with assimilation. Assimilation is something that the colonialists, and later the nativists advocated. Hybridity is a two-way process in which both parties are interactive so that something new is created.¹³⁸

For Sugirtharajah, dispersed peoples tried to forge their shared memory and history, “while at the same time acknowledging that not all diasporas are the same.”¹³⁹

2.4.5. Fernando F. Segovia

Similarly, to understand the diaspora community in the Bible, based on his own diasporic experience, Fernando F. Segovia, the Hispanic-American scholar, suggests “the juxtaposition of Postcolonial Studies and Diasporic Studies.”¹⁴⁰ In his essay, *Toward a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora*, Segovia proposes a hermeneutical framework for understanding “the flesh-and-blood reader in biblical criticism.”¹⁴¹ For Segovia, “the flesh-and-blood reader” is “a member of distinct and identifiable social configurations, as a reader from and within a social location.”¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 179–80.

¹³⁸ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 190–91.

¹³⁹ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 184.

¹⁴⁰ Segovia, “Interpreting beyond Borders,” 11.

¹⁴¹ Segovia, “Towards a Hermeneutics,” 57–74.

¹⁴² Segovia, “Towards a Hermeneutics,” 58.

His main focus is to understand people from the Third World who are forced to live in the First World.¹⁴³ In the First World, they are “strangers or aliens, the permanent others.”¹⁴⁴ Thus, Segovia suggests that biblical critics should begin with contextualization to listen to the voice of *otherness*.¹⁴⁵ He states:

It is a voice that seeks not a dehumanization or rehumanization of the reader but a liberating and empowering humanization of the reader, of all readers, by taking fully into account the experience and culture of readers in the act of reading and interpretation. Such is the basis for a diaspora hermeneutics of otherness and engagement, from which emerges the proposed reading strategy of intercultural criticism.¹⁴⁶

His emphasis of the voice of otherness leads us to consider the voice of margins in biblical texts in the shadow of empire. From a postcolonial perspective, Segovia encourages interpreters to have critical questions as follows:

How do the margins look at the “world” — a world dominated by the reality of empire — and fashion life in such a world? How does the center regard and treat the margins in the light of its own view of the “world” and life in that world? What images and representations of the other-world arise from either side? How is history conceived and constructed by both sides? How is “the other” regarded and represented? What conceptions of oppression and justice are to be found? From the perspective of postcolonial studies, such questions — questions of culture, ideology, and power — emerge as crucial.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Segovia, “Towards a Hermeneutics,” 60.

¹⁴⁴ Segovia, “Towards a Hermeneutics,” 64.

¹⁴⁵ Segovia, “Towards a Hermeneutics,” 67.

¹⁴⁶ Segovia, “Towards a Hermeneutics,” 67–68.

¹⁴⁷ Fernando F. Segovia, “Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies: Toward a Postcolonial Optic,” in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 38.

2.4.6. Jeffrey Kahjin Kuan

Following Segovia's perspective, through the lens of diasporic experience of a Chinese-Malaysian-American, Jeffrey Kuan interprets biblical texts. He depicts Chinese Americans' cultural identity as "highly hybridized, marked by liminality, a state of 'in-betweenness'."¹⁴⁸ Indeed, while Chinese Americans maintain their Chinese religio-cultural traditions, they are also becoming in practice 'Americanized.'¹⁴⁹ From Kuan's experience, "they could never fully become Malaysian, Burmese, Indonesian, and so forth, because the host country would always define them as 'the Chinese in their midst'."¹⁵⁰ This diasporic experience enables Kuan to interpret the book of Esther from a postcolonial perspective. He first analyzes the identity of Mordecai. According to Kuan's analysis, Mordecai is a 'Benjaminite-Judean/Jewish-Persian', which indicates his cultural identity as "highly hybridized" in the diasporic community.¹⁵¹ In the case of Esther, she has both a Hebrew name "Hadassah" (Esther 2:7) and a non-Hebrew name "Esther." The identity of Esther "magnifies the two worlds in which she has to negotiate her way."¹⁵² While they seem to assimilate into the Persian Empire's rules, they also maintain their ethnic and religious identity. Their hybridity and ambiguity or their liminal state brings about the crisis desired by Haman (Esther 3). Thus, Kuan argues that "the diaspora Jewish community was

¹⁴⁸ Jeffrey K. Kuan, "Diasporic Reading of a Diasporic Text: Identity Politics and Race Relations and the Book of Esther," in *Interpreting Beyond Borders*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 166–67.

¹⁴⁹ Kuan, "Diasporic Reading," 166.

¹⁵⁰ Kuan, "Diasporic Reading," 167.

¹⁵¹ Kuan, "Diasporic Reading," 169.

¹⁵² Kuan, "Diasporic Reading," 170.

not willing to subscribe to the national ideology of the host country but maintained their religio-cultural traditions.”¹⁵³

2.4.7. Uriah Y. Kim

From a postcolonial perspective, Uriah Y. Kim as a Korean American scholar also examined King Josiah in the Deuteronomistic History. In his book, *Decolonizing Josiah*, Kim challenges the image of King Josiah who powerfully attempted to unify the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom of Judah in the Deuteronomistic History.¹⁵⁴ For Kim, the DH’s description of King Josiah reflects a Eurocentric theological perspective. Thus, by introducing Bhabha’s “space of liminality,” Kim argues that Josiah’s kingdom experienced “the *Realpolitik* of liminality.”¹⁵⁵ For Kim, “Josiah was a victim of being located in the middle of the confrontation of the two powers (Egypt-Assyria and Babylonia-Medes) competing to control the Near East unified by the Sargonid Dynasty.”¹⁵⁶ From a postcolonial perspective, the kingdom of Josiah is “no more than a petty state situated at the margin of the ancient Near East.”¹⁵⁷ In general, many scholars agree that after the death of Assyrian king Ashurbanipal in 627 BCE, the influence of the Neo-Assyrian Empire on the province of Samerina was diminished. Thus, King Josiah could have an opportunity to destroy the shrine at Bethel (2 Kings 23:15). In contrast,

¹⁵³ Kuan, “Diasporic Reading,” 171.

¹⁵⁴ Uriah Y. Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History*, BMW 5 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005).

¹⁵⁵ Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, 206.

¹⁵⁶ Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, 221.

¹⁵⁷ Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, 241.

Kim argues that the governorship of Samerina would have continued under the influence of Assyria.¹⁵⁸ For Kim, King Josiah's religious reform in Bethel reflects "his attempt to discourage the Israelite Judeans (descendants of the northern immigrants/refugees) who wanted to return to Samaria after the 'retreat' of Assyria from that region rather than to reunify the divided kingdom or to attract the northerners to Judah."¹⁵⁹ It is significant that Kim as an Asian American scholar, reads the story of Josiah from the perspective of the *Realpolitik* of liminality rather than the perspective of Euro-American scholars.

2.4.8. Steed Vernyl Davidson

In his book, *Empire and Exile: Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah*, Steed Vernyl Davidson explored the Book of Jeremiah from a postcolonial perspective. As Davidson considers the ancient biblical experience of "displacement, statelessness, and landlessness" by "the actions of Neo-Babylonian imperial power," he argues that "the book of Jeremiah stands as a text of resistance to imperial power."¹⁶⁰ For Davidson, the book of Jeremiah written by the dominated reflects the reality of empire.¹⁶¹ His main argument is that "the book of Jeremiah is shaped in a context of physical displacement from the homeland."¹⁶² The people of Judah as a displaced people or the marginalized wrote the book of Jeremiah "from a marginal position to

¹⁵⁸ Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, 178.

¹⁵⁹ Kim, *Decolonizing Josiah*, 242.

¹⁶⁰ Steed V. Davidson, *Empire and Exile: Postcolonial Readings of the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: T & T Clark, 2011), 2–3.

¹⁶¹ Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 3.

¹⁶² Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 8.

critique the imperial center for (re)integration and (re)building of the (dis)placed community, both inside and outside of the land.”¹⁶³ Above all, Davidson’s methodology for the book of Jeremiah is impressive, since he tried to integrate traditional methodologies alongside newer critical theories in order to interpret the book of Jeremiah.¹⁶⁴ While Davidson examines texts using diachronic methodologies, he also considers their meaning from a postcolonial perspective. For example, he not only analyzes the final form of Jeremiah 32 with the historical-critical method, but also interprets Jeremiah’s symbolic action using Bhabha’s theory.¹⁶⁵

2.4.9. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher

Daniel L. Smith-Christopher examined the book of Ezekiel from a postcolonial perspective.¹⁶⁶ In his article, *Ezekiel on Fanon’s Couch: A Postcolonialist Dialogue with David Halperin’s Seeking Ezekiel*, based upon the refugee theology, Smith-Christopher reconsiders the identity of Ezekiel and the meaning of the Exile. With regard to the identity of Ezekiel, Smith-Christopher states as follows:

Ezekiel’s opening vision reflects his struggle with his question, and his bizarre vision shows us his reflection on being in diaspora. All biblical books are products of a community of transmission, and the community of the book of Ezekiel is clearly a

¹⁶³ Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 8.

¹⁶⁴ Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 9.

¹⁶⁵ Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 55–87.

¹⁶⁶ Smith-Christopher, “Ezekiel on Fanon’s Couch,” 108–44.

community struggling with mobile identities and transnational culture and theology. *That* is why Ezekiel's crisis is our crisis. And that is why we listen to Ezekiel today.¹⁶⁷

By introducing Bhabha's comments on postcolonial migration and the narratives of cultural and political diaspora, Smith-Christopher stresses that Ezekiel and his community must have been struggling to find their identity during the Babylonian Exile. Following Martin Noth's argument that "the exiles were not 'prisoners' but represented a compulsorily transplanted subject population who were able to move about freely in their daily life,"¹⁶⁸ biblical scholars typically argue that "the exiles were not slaves."¹⁶⁹ However, as Smith-Christopher introduces Nebuchadnezzar II's reference to the fate of "the Hattim" (Palestine and the coastal regions), he argues that the terms used in his inscription "I forced them to work" certainly refer to *corvée* labor. More importantly, in contrast to David Halperin's psycho-sexual interpretation of the book of Ezekiel, Smith-Christopher suggests that the book of Ezekiel reflects his actual traumatic circumstances.¹⁷⁰

2.4.10. Jean-Pierre Ruiz

Building upon Smith-Christopher's analysis of a traumatized Ezekiel, Jean-Pierre Ruiz interpreted Ezekiel 20 from a postcolonial perspective. He further examined the postcolonial main idioms such as "identity, hybridity, assimilation, and resistance" in Ezekiel 20, especially Ezek 20:32: "What you are thinking will never happen: We shall become like the nations, like

¹⁶⁷ Smith-Christopher, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch," 110.

¹⁶⁸ Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (London: SCM Press, 1983), 296.

¹⁶⁹ Smith-Christopher, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch," 119–20.

¹⁷⁰ Smith-Christopher, "Ezekiel on Fanon's Couch," 126–44.

the tribes of the countries, worshipping wood and stone.”¹⁷¹ Like Smith-Christopher, Ruiz also criticizes biblical scholars’ argument that the Neo-Babylonian Empire enabled the deportees to maintain their business so that they were not prisoners.¹⁷² Ruiz attempts to answer why Ezekiel and his community were traumatized as follows:

We need to recall that, although they belonged to the elite classes of the Judean population, Ezekiel and the other Judeans by the Chebar were in fact forced deportees, not voluntary expatriates. That being the case, Ezek 20:32 can be recognized —through a postcolonial optic—as an unmistakable expression of destitution, Pérez Firmat’s second stage of exilic adaptation, in which “the awareness of displacement crushes the fantasy of rootedness.” Pérez Firmat elaborates: at this point exiles felt “that the ground has been taken out from under them, that they no longer know their place, that they have in fact lost their place. Rather than nostalgic, they now feel estranged and disconnected.”¹⁷³

For Ruiz, Ezek 20:32 indicates that the elite classes of the Judean population realize “they have lost their special place among the nations.”¹⁷⁴ Ruiz argues that “this promised deterritorialization into the wilderness of the peoples is reaffirmed in Ezek 20:39–42 by a reterritorialization.”¹⁷⁵ In particular, Ruiz argues that the reestablishment of the deportees in YHWH’s own land in Ezek 20:40–41 addresses “the despair of the deportees with an unmistakable expression of resistance against the Neo-Babylonian imperial ideology.”¹⁷⁶ As Vanderhooft points out, the Neo-

¹⁷¹ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 127–28.

¹⁷² Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 128.

¹⁷³ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 129.

¹⁷⁴ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 131.

¹⁷⁵ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 131.

¹⁷⁶ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 131.

Babylonian imperial ideology emphasizes that the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II is presented as “protector of humanity,” whereas the Neo-Assyrian kings imposed their yoke on the conquered.¹⁷⁷ For Ruiz, Ezekiel intentionally inverts the Neo-Babylonian ideology, especially “the distinction between the metropolitan center and the conquered subject peripheries.”¹⁷⁸ Ruiz suggests that by emphasizing YHWH’s sovereignty over the world, Ezek 20:1–44 not only presents Ezekiel’s resistant worldview, but also reflects “the promise of a new exodus.”¹⁷⁹ The forced deportation had significant effects on the identity of the exile community “between assimilation and resistance” in 597 BCE.¹⁸⁰ For Ruiz, Ezekiel addressed “the predeportation polemic against the worship of gods other than the national deity” as his discourse of “subaltern resistance for a population of involuntary deportees.”¹⁸¹

2.5. Summary

In this chapter, we have discussed methodologies to understand the book of Ezekiel. Apparently, form critical methodology has shed light on the text itself both diachronically and synchronically. As Ellen F. Davis points out in *Swallowing the Scroll*, the book of Ezekiel is a written scripture to teach the meaning of the Exile for Ezekiel’s community in Babylon.¹⁸² Evidently, form critical analysis of the final written text helps us to recognize the purpose of

¹⁷⁷ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 131–32.

¹⁷⁸ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 132.

¹⁷⁹ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 132–33.

¹⁸⁰ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 134.

¹⁸¹ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 134.

¹⁸² Ellen F. Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel’s Prophecy*. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989).

Ezekiel's written speeches for his community. Nevertheless, the form critical method has its own limits in helping us to understand Ezekiel's hidden scripts against Empires.

We need to further engage with the relationship between the Neo-Babylonian Empire as imperial power and Ezekiel's community as the Others. Scott's hidden scripts against Empire and postbiblical criticism would be very helpful tools to understand such a relationship. Previous biblical scholarship for the book of Ezekiel has mostly ignored Ezekiel's critique against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, since Ezekiel does not directly prophesy against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. When we consider the forced deportation of the exile community in 597 BCE, it would be difficult for Ezekiel to directly address his prophecy against the Neo-Babylonian Empire because his community was severely monitored by their rulers. Before the Exile, Ezekiel and the Judean elites have their own privileges in the temple of Jerusalem. They firmly believed that YHWH would protect His people. However, after the forced migration by Nebuchadnezzar II in 597 BCE, they were frustrated by the absence of YHWH. Ezekiel and his community must have been traumatized. From being the center, they moved to become the Other during the Exile. Nevertheless, Ezekiel maintains his religious traditions, while he indirectly criticizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire. With respect to the resistance by the dominated in the Exile, Said states as follows:

The post-imperial writers of the Third World therefore bear their past within them —as scars of humiliating wounds, as instigation for different practices, as potentially revised visions of the past tending toward a post-colonial future, as urgently reinterpretable and redeployable experiences, in which the formerly silent native speaks and acts on territory reclaimed as part of a general movement of resistance, from the colonist.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 238.

In one sense, Ezekiel's acculturation in Babylon functions as hybridity. Ezekiel who knows his previous religious traditions also experiences the Neo-Babylonian religious practices. While Ezekiel reinterprets the right relationship between YHWH and His people, he emphasizes YHWH's sovereignty over the world. We will discuss Ezekiel's hidden transcript as resistance against the Neo-Babylonian Empire in chapter three and four. By appropriating the kingship in the Sumerian city laments and Assyrian royal ideology, Ezekiel indirectly mocks the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II, even the Babylonian main deity, Marduk. In the next chapter, I will explore how Ezekiel appropriates Sumerian city laments to highlight YHWH's kingship over the world.

CHAPTER THREE: SUMERIAN LITERATURE AND THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the influence of Sumerian literature on the book of Ezekiel. I argue that during the exile in Babylon, Ezekiel appropriated Sumerian texts to highlight YHWH's kingship in the new temple. Many biblical scholars have long examined parallels between Sumerian literature and the book of Ezekiel.¹⁸⁴ Based upon Sumerian city laments, they often conclude that Sumerian deities arbitrarily destroyed their cities without any reasons, while YHWH destroyed His own city because of sin in the book of Ezekiel.¹⁸⁵ However, they have tended to focus too much on the theme of divine absence in the Sumerian city laments.

But in order to understand the theological perspective of the book of Ezekiel, one needs to analyze the Curse of Agade (CA) and the Cuthean Legend. CA and the Cuthean Legend also draw attention to sin, especially the sacrilege of a bad king. In CA and the Cuthean Legend, Sumerian scribes criticized Naram-Sin (2254–2218 BCE), the grandson of Sargon of Akkade since he destroyed Ekur, the sanctuary for Enlil. In an attempt to highlight Enlil's sanctuary, Sumerian scribes employed the theme of divine abandonment in their texts to legitimize their current kingship during the Ur III dynasty (2112–2004 BCE).

¹⁸⁴ Patrick D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 1–26; Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1991), 183–218; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993), 45–51; Jeffrey Jay Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 136–41; 254–79; Niehaus, *Ancient near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2008), 116–37; John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 101–49; Donna L. Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

¹⁸⁵ Niehaus, *Ancient near Eastern Themes*, 120.

Similarly, Sumerian city laments accentuate the role of a king for the return of their patron deities in the restored temple for the legitimacy of Isin dynasty (2017–1985 BCE). Sumerian city laments, especially the Nippur lament, the Eridu lament, and the Uruk lament highlight Išme-Dagan as a good king in the new restored temple. In other words, Sumerian scribes intentionally legitimize Išme-Dagan, king of the Isin dynasty (1953–1935 BCE). Išme-Dagan not only rebuilds a new temple for his deities, but also brings new offerings to their deities. Because of his efforts to rebuild the new temple, his patron deities stop their wrath and return to the new temple. The theme of divine presence and absence reflects political propaganda to legitimate their current kingship.

Likewise, Ezekiel theologically interprets that YHWH abandoned His own people because of their sin. However, Ezekiel’s viewpoint is not political propaganda for the Neo-Babylonian Empire. As Ezekiel highlights that YHWH is a true king in the restored temple in Ezekiel 40–48, he depicts that the role of king is inevitably limited. Instead of the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ “king,” Ezekiel intentionally uses נָשִׂיךְ “prince” who brings ritual offerings to YHWH (Ezek 44:3; 45:17; 45:22–23; and 46:2–3).

With respect to CA and the Cuthean Legend, scholars have long interested in Naram-Sin because he becomes an archetype of a sinful king for the Sumerian and Akkadian historiographic traditions on account of his sacrilegious destruction against the primary Sumerian god Enlil.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ For a complete translation of the CA, see Jerrold S. Cooper, *The Curse of Agade* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). The most comprehensive translation of Cuthean Legend is provided by Joan Goodnick Westenholz. See Joan Goodnick Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade: The Texts* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997). For a recent study of the Akkadian empire, see Benjamin R. Foster, *The Age of Agade: Inventing Empire in Ancient Mesopotamia* (New York: Routledge, 2016). For a discussion of so-called, *Unheilsherrscher*, Naram-Sin as a negative model for the Sumerian and Akkadian historiography, see Hans-Gustav Güterbock, “Die Historische Tradition Und Ihre Literarische Gestaltung Bei Babyloniern Und Hethitern Bis 1200.,” *ZA* 42 (1934): 1–91. Through the typology of the *Unheilsherrscher* in Naram-Sin, Carl D. Evans investigated the Deuteronomist’s viewpoint about Jeroboam ben Nebat, the first monarch of the north Israelite kingdom. See Carl D. Evans, “Naram-Sin and Jeroboam: The Archetypal *Unheilsherrscher* in Mesopotamia and Biblical Historiography,”

Of particular importance is that Naram-Sin's sacrilege and hubris precipitated divine absence from Agade, the capital of Akkade. It is the first Sumerian composition which connects human responsibility with divine absence. While the Sumerian city laments portray the departure of their titular deities as their capricious decision, CA and the Cuthean Legend explain that gods left their city Agade due to Naram-Sin's disobedience of their omens and Naram-Sin's destruction of Enlil's temple, Ekur, in Nippur. Naram-Sin's sacrilegious behavior against gods had a substantial effect on "the misfortune-prone ruler" motif in Sumerian-Akkadian literature.¹⁸⁷ When Hans-Gustav Güterbock first called attention to Naram-Sin's motifs, he coined a term, *Unheilsherrscher* as an evil king who causes disaster because of his impious behavior.¹⁸⁸ Of course, Jerrold S. Cooper insists that "the initial displeasure of Inanna and Enlil in the Curse of Agade might also have been arbitrary."¹⁸⁹ However, contra Cooper's argument, more recently, Justin C. Johnson disagrees with his argument since "the Mesopotamian scribes explained that the end of the empire as resulting from a mistake, which Naram-Sin could have avoided, that provoked the anger of the gods against him."¹⁹⁰ Regardless of historical issues of Naram-Sin, the

in *Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method*, ed. William H. Hallo, James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 99–109; Mario Liverani, "The Book of Kings and ancient Near Eastern Historiography" in *The Book of Kings and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, ed. André Lemaire, Baruch Halpern, and Matthew J. Adams, (Leiden: Brill, 2010). For the influence of Naram-Sin motifs on the Weidner Chronicle, see Bill T. Arnold, "The Weidner Chronicle and the Idea of History," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context*, ed. A. R. Millard, J. K. Hoffmeier, and D. W. Baker (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 129–148. Michael C. Astour insists that Ezekiel had access to Babylonian literature, the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin. See Michael C. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976): 567–79. Building upon Albert K. Grayson's concept of *narû* (stele) literature as "pseudo-autobiography", Tremper Longman III examined subgenres of "fictional autobiography" in Naram-Sin's *narû* literature. See Tremper Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991).

¹⁸⁷ Bill T. Arnold, *Who Were the Babylonians?* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 27.

¹⁸⁸ Güterbock, "Die Historische Tradition," 75.

¹⁸⁹ Cooper, *Curse of Agade*, 30.

¹⁹⁰ Justin C. Johnson, "The Cost of Cosmogony," in *The Fabric of Cities: Aspects of Urbanism, Urban Topography and Society in Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome*, ed. Natalie N. May and Ulrike Steinert (Boston: Brill, 2013), 58.

Sumerian scribes preserved the traumatic experience in the aftermath of his cruel devastation of Ekur. I will examine the main features of the two texts, and the relationship between Naram-Sin's sacrilegious behavior and divine absence.

Having analyzed the role of kingship in Naram-Sin's texts, I will investigate Sumerian city laments. While the Curse of Agade portrays Naram-Sin as a sinful king, Sumerian city laments, especially the Nippur lament, the Eridu lament, and the Uruk lament depict Išme-Dagan of the Isin dynasty (1953–1935 BCE) as a good king, since Išme-Dagan rebuilt Enlil's temple in Nippur. As we will see below in detail, Sumeriologists such as Margaret W. Green,¹⁹¹ Piotr Michalowski,¹⁹² and Steve Tinney¹⁹³ suggest that Sumerian scribes intentionally reshaped the Curse of Agade to legitimize Išme-Dagan under the Isin dynasty. Instead of introducing their patron deities' curse on a city, Sumerian city laments include the content of restoration in the last section. When we consider the literary sequence of the Sumerian city laments, the literary structure of the book of Ezekiel is associated with them. The laments do not explicitly describe the reasons of divine abandonment.¹⁹⁴ In particular, the restoration in the city laments is involved in the role of king in a restored temple in Ezek 40–48. For example, 𒌦𒍪𒍪 “prince” as a king

¹⁹¹ Margaret W. Green, “The Uruk Lament,” *JAOS* 104 (1984): 253–79.

¹⁹² Piotr Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1989).

¹⁹³ Steve Tinney, *The Nippur Lament: Royal Rhetoric and Divine Legitimation in the Reign of Išme-Dagan of Isin (1953-1935 B.C.)* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1996).

¹⁹⁴ M. W. Green categorized the Sumerian city laments in five major themes: “destruction, assignment of responsibility, abandonment, restoration, and return.” See Green, “Uruk Lament,” 253. As Paul Wayne Ferris, Jr. consider *balag* and *eršemma*, he identifies eight themes: the anger of the gods, the decision of deity to act, the actions of deity, the identity and actions of the political enemy, remonstrations, protestations of innocence, appeal, and praise. See Paul W. Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 54–61. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp categorized nine features: subject and mood, structure and poetic technique, divine abandonment, assignment of responsibility, the divine agent of destruction, destruction, the weeping goddess, lamentation, and restoration of the city and return of the gods. See Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 30–96.

(Ezek 44:3) has affinities with Išme-Dagan as Enlil’s agent who fulfilled the restoration of the city. Like Išme-Dagan, 𒌦𒍪 “prince” brings ritual offerings to YHWH in the restored temple (Ezek 45:22). I will discuss how scribes intentionally introduced Išme-Dagan as a rebuilder for Enlil’s temple for their political propaganda. Then, I will further investigate “the heart pacification unit” in Emesal Prayers in the first millennium, which appeared as a ritual lament after the Sumerian city laments ceased to be recopied by scribes.¹⁹⁵ Among Emesal prayers, the role of king in Eršahuga will be discussed. Next, I will explain how biblical scholars have attempted to compare the Sumerian city laments with the biblical literature. In the last section, I will examine the thematic features as to how the Sumerian city laments depict their patron deities’ abandonment and their return. Thus, I will investigate parallels between the Sumerian city laments and the book of Ezekiel.

3.2. The Curse of Agade

Jerrold S. Cooper who published a complete monograph for the Curse of Agade insists that CA is a kind of propaganda for political and religious ideology.¹⁹⁶ Since Hans-Gustav Güterbock reconstructed CA in 1934, Assyriologists have suggested that Naram-Sin’s razing of Ekur in Nippur provoked Sumerian historians’ anger and thus Sumerian scribes expressed their emotion in CA, especially during the period of the Ur III dynasty (2112–2004 BCE).¹⁹⁷ By criticizing Naram-Sin’s devastation of Ekur in Nippur, Sumerian scribes under the Ur III dynasty

¹⁹⁵ For a detailed overview of the *balag* and *eršemma*, see Uri Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts of the Gods: Sumerian Emesal Prayers of the First Millennium BCE* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 5–9.

¹⁹⁶ Cooper, *Curse of Agade*, 8.

¹⁹⁷ Cooper, *Curse of Agade*, 6–7.

attempted to establish the Ur III dynasty's legitimacy. For this reason, scholars have drawn attention to scribes' political interpretation of Naram-Sin.

Presumably, Sumerian scribes intentionally composed the Curse of Agade to accentuate their sanctuary, Ekur in Nippur. At the outset of CA, Agade functioned as a religious center under the protection of Enlil and Inanna (Akk. Ištar), a patron goddess of Kish and Uruk. But due to Naram-Sin's razing of the Ekur temple in Nippur, Enlil called Gutians to destroy Agade. Cooper argues that "the initial prosperity serves as a foil for the subsequent destruction; in the laments, the initial destruction is juxtaposed with a concluding restoration, or hoped-for restoration."¹⁹⁸ In other words, as Sumerian scribes in Nippur portrayed Agade's destruction, they hoped for the restoration of their temple, Ekur. The first part of CA (lines 1-53) portrays Naram-Sin's prosperity under the protection of Enlil and Inanna and how Agade became the center of gods' sanctuaries. After Enlil slaughtered Kish and Uruk, he gave sovereignty and kingship to Sargon, Naram-Sin's grandfather. Inanna abandoned her cities and dwelt in Agade. Inanna not only brought lots of precious stones to Agade, but also endowed Akkadians with her advice. Naram-Sin enjoyed the highest happiness with Inanna's support. Above all, Agade functioned as a religious center for other nations.

Holy Inanna did not sleep.

At that time, she filled Agade's... with gold,

She filled its shining...with silver,

Delivered copper, tin, and blocks of lapis to its granaries,

Sealed them away in its silos.

¹⁹⁸ Cooper, *Curse of Agade*, 20–21.

She endowed its old women with advice,
She endowed its old men with counsel,
She endowed its young women with dances,
She endowed its young men with martial might,
She endowed its little ones with joy....
All foreign lands rested contentedly,
Their people experienced happiness.
Its (Agade's) king, the shepherd Naramsin,
Rose like the sun on the holy throne of Agade ...
All the governors, temple administrators, and land registrars of the Gu'edena,
Regularly supplied monthly and New Year offerings there. (CA lines 24–52).¹⁹⁹

However, the mood suddenly changed after Inanna decided to abandon Agade in CA lines 55–62. Because the word from Ekur was as silent (CA line 57), Inanna faced difficulty in founding her house (CA line 56). Other gods such as Utu, Enki also took away their shrines from Agade (CA lines 70–76). After Naram-Sin saw all these events in his dream, he was immobile for seven years (CA lines 86–93). Why did Inanna suddenly change her mind and abandon Agade? With regard to this issue, Carl D. Evans assumes that Enlil commanded Inanna to leave Agade.²⁰⁰ Jason Radine also argues that “disfavor seems to arise from Naram-Sin rebuilding Inanna's temple in Akkade without Enlil's permission, such that Inanna withdraws from the

¹⁹⁹ Cooper's translation, *Curse of Agade*, 52-53.

²⁰⁰ Evans, “Naram-Sin and Jeroboam,” 100.

city.”²⁰¹ But the text itself does not say anything about Naram-Sin’s activity except that Inanna could not get enough luxuries to construct her temple. Nevertheless, when one considers Sumerian scribes’ religious viewpoint, Naram-Sin made no attempt to refurbish Inanna’s temple with luxurious materials.

In the middle part of CA (CA lines 94–145), Sumerian scribes depict Naram-Sin’s sacrilegious destruction of Ekur in detail. Naram-Sin performed extispicy twice to alter the disaster in his dream, but received negative omens (CA lines 94–99). To alter Enlil’s pronouncement, Naram-Sin with his troops destroyed Ekur:

He set tall ladders against the temple.

To demolish Ekur as if it were a huge ship

To break up its soil, like mountains where precious metals are mined,

To splinter it, like the lapis lazuli mountain,

To prostrate it, like a city inundated by Iškur

For the temple — though it was not the mountains where cedars are felled

He had large axes cast,

He had double-edged agasilig-axes sharpened.

He set spades against its roots, and

It sunk low as the foundation,

He set axes against its branches, and

²⁰¹ Jason Radine, *The Book of Amos in Emergent Judah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 158.

The temple, alike a dead soldier, fell prostrate

All the foreign lands fell prostrate.²⁰²

While scribes briefly depict the destruction of Kish and Uruk (CA lines 1–4), they highlight Naram-Sin’s cruel suppression of Ekur in detail. Based on a stamped brick inscription in Istanbul, Aage Westenholz argues that Naram-Sin or his son, Shar-Kali-Sharri, began the rebuilding of Ekur.²⁰³ But regardless of historical evidence of his rebuilding, Naram-Sin’s sacrilegious destruction of Ekur must have left a deep scar on Sumerian scribes.

In the next section (CA lines 149–209), Sumerian scribes not only portray how Enlil avenged Agade through the barbarian Gutians, a famine, and a decline in rainfall but also describe how Enlil’s sanctuary is remodeled in the wake of Naram-Sin’s devastation. Enlil, as “the roaring storm,” summoned the Gutians to destroy Agade (CA lines 149–169). By depicting their appearance like monkeys without human intelligence (CA line 156), Sumerian scribes emphasize that their barbarian features are merciless. In the wake of the human attack, the people of Agade were rendered non-productive, and even clouds no longer rained there (CA lines 170–175). It is noteworthy that Sumerian scribes write about the status of Ekur while they describe the devastation of Agade: “At that time, Enlil remodeled *His great sanctuaries* into *tiny reed sanctuaries*” (CA line 194).²⁰⁴ This sequence reminds us of a little sanctuary in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 11:16). When Ezekiel depicts YHWH’s departure from Jerusalem in his visions in Ezek 8–11, Ezekiel emphasizes that YHWH Himself will be *a little sanctuary* (מִקְדָּשׁ קָטָן) for the exiles (Ezek 11:16). Just as Sumerian scribes hoped the revival of Ekur temple, so do the

²⁰² Cooper’s translation, *Curse of Agade*, 56-57.

²⁰³ Aage Westenholz, *Old Sumerian and Old Akkadian Texts in Philadelphia, Chiefly from Nippur* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1975), 40.

²⁰⁴ Cooper’s translation, *Curse of Agade*, 59.

Babylonian exiles expect YHWH's sanctuary among them. Furthermore, in CA 200–209, Sumerian scribes express sufferings of Akkadians in a form of dirge or city lament:

Put in place seven *balag*-drums, as if they stood at heaven's base, and
Played *ub*, *meze*, and *lilis*-drums for him (Enlil) among them (the *balags*).
The old women did not restrain (the cry) "Alas its people!"
The lamentation singer did not restrain (the cry) "Alas the Ekur!"
Its young women did not restrain from tearing their hair,
Its young men did not restrain their sharp knives
Their laments were (like) laments which Enlil's ancestors
Perform in the awe-inspiring *duku*, the holy lap of Enlil.
Because of this, Enlil entered his holy bedchamber, and lay down fasting.²⁰⁵

Survivors who were escaped from the Gutians performed their lament and fasting. Cooper insists that their laments and fasting performance is done in the hope of soothing the angry god, Enlil.²⁰⁶

In the last part of CA (CA lines 210–244), Babylonian gods utter their curse against Agade rather than their restoration for Agade. While the Sumerian city laments depict the restoration of their cities by their titular deities after devastation by Enlil, CA does not include the restoration part. The great gods such as Sin, Enki, Inanna, Ninurta, Iškur, Utu, Nusku, and Nisaba keep uttering their curse against Agade to pacify their angry leader Enlil:

May no one find his acquaintance there,

²⁰⁵ Cooper's translation, *Curse of Agade*, 59-61.

²⁰⁶ Cooper, *Curse of Agade*, 5.

May brother not recognize brother!

May its young woman be cruelly killed in her woman's domain,

May its old man cry bitterly for his slain wife!

May its pigeons moan in their holes,

May its birds be smitten in their nooks,

May they, like frightened pigeons, become immobilized! (CA lines 215–221)²⁰⁷

Their tenacious curse on Agade reflects their strong animosity against Naram-Sin. With regard to the Gutians, William J. Hamblin insists that during the reign of Naram-Sin, the Gutians did not devastate Agade but emerged as a major military threat against Akkade only after the death of Naram-Sin's son, Shar-Kali-Sharri.²⁰⁸ Evans also asserts that “this is a distortion of history.”²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, although the historical value of CA is doubtful, the curses by the Babylonian gods attest to the Sumerian scribes' strong antipathy against Naram-Sin's devastation of Ekur.

3.3. The Cuthean Legend as Fictional Autobiography

While the Curse of Agade cursorily explains Inanna's departure from Agade, the Cuthean Legend fully depicts that the Babylonian deities abandoned Naram-Sin because of his disobedience against omens. Indeed, in a didactic or heuristic form, the text harshly criticizes Naram-Sin's hubristic decision against diviners' omens so that future kings avoid his errors.

²⁰⁷ Cooper's translation, *Curse of Agade*, 61.

²⁰⁸ William J. Hamblin, *Warfare in the Ancient Near East to 1600 BC: Holy Warriors at the Dawn of History* (London: Routledge, 2006), 102.

²⁰⁹ Evans, “Naram-Sin and Jeroboam,” 102.

Moreover, the first-person speaker, Naram-Sin, introspects his faults against his deities. In contrast to historiographic descriptions in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions, the Cuthean Legend emphasizes the relationship between divine absence and the role of king.

On account of the peculiar features of Naram-Sin in the Cuthean Legend, Assyriologists have long examined its genre and purpose.²¹⁰ As I mentioned above, Güterbock, who investigated ancient Mesopotamian historiography, paid attention to ancient scribes' special interests in the *narû* (commemorative stele) inscriptions for Sargon and Naram-Sin in the third millennium.²¹¹ Güterbock doubted its historicity not only because the Cuthean Legend itself has mythological elements, but also because it has different traditions in the Old Babylonian, the Middle Babylonian, the Standard Babylonian recension, and even the Hittites fragments.²¹² Indeed, while the Old Babylonian royal inscriptions in general engraved their chronicles, battle plans and building plans, the *narû* narratives focus on Naram-Sin's behaviors toward deities. A. K. Grayson further developed Güterbock's argument and suggested that the Cuthean Legend is "Pseudo-Autobiography."²¹³ He insists that the Cuthean Legend is defined as "Pseudo-Autobiography" as follows:

The Cuthean legend of Naram-Sin is a story of how Naram-Sin failed time and again to defeat invading hordes. The reason for this, according to the text, was his refusal to heed

²¹⁰ Hans-Gustav Güterbock, "Die Historische Tradition Und Ihre Literarische Gestaltung Bei Babyloniern Und Hethitern Bis 1200.," ZA 42 (1934): 1–91; Albert K. Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," *Orientalia* 49 (1980): 140–94; Tremper Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1991); Joan G. Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade: The Texts* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997); Dale F. Launderville, *Piety and Politics: The Dynamics of Royal Authority in Homeric Greece, Biblical Israel, and Old Babylonian Mesopotamia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003).

²¹¹ Güterbock, "Die Historische Tradition," 19.

²¹² Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade*, 263–368.

²¹³ Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," 187–188.

the omens. The story concludes with an exhortation to a later prince to learn from this tale of woe and conduct himself accordingly. It is a didactic document, intended to convince contemporary and future monarchs of the power of the diviner.²¹⁴

In a similar vein, building upon R. Labet's definition of "fictional stela" and E. Reiner's definition of "*res gestae* (autobiographies of Caesar Augustus)," Tremper Longman III categorized the Cuthean Legend as "fictional Akkadian autobiography."²¹⁵ He argues that Mesopotamian scribes used the *narû* inscriptions "in which kings use events of the past in order to instruct their successors."²¹⁶ Thus Tremper Longman III notes:

Autobiography is an account of the life (or part thereof) of an individual written by the individual himself or herself. The composition must be written in the first person and include reminiscences of the past life of the first-person narrator. (For the purpose of this study, it should be added that a fictional autobiography is a composition where the life of an individual, real or imagined, is written by a second individual under the name of the first individual at a later period of time. Fictional autobiography is thus pseudonymous.)²¹⁷

He also characterizes the fictional Akkadian autobiography with four features: fictional, written in Akkadian, autobiographical, and all written in prose. Modern Assyriologists disagree with his categories for two reasons. First, as I mentioned above, the Cuthean Legend is also written in other languages (Sumer and Hittite). Second, some texts are written in a poetic or semipoetic narrative style.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, the definition "fictional Akkadian autobiography" makes us

²¹⁴ Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," 188.

²¹⁵ Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 46–47.

²¹⁶ Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 46.

²¹⁷ Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 40–41.

²¹⁸ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 19.

reconsider its purpose. It is not written for a specific description of Naram-Sin's history. Rather, it is written for a specific political purpose in the name of Naram-Sin in a different historical situation. Thus, when Tremper Longman focused on its political propaganda, he notes as follows:

The Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin proposes a curtailment of royal imperialism and encourages attention to domestic policies. Perhaps Finkelstein is correct here to view this as the temple's attempt to slow down overweening imperialism. This position may be supported by the theme of Naram-Sin's hubris in the face of repeated warnings on the part of the cult to forego attacking the foreign horde.²¹⁹

With regard to Naram-Sin as a foil for a sinful king, scholars such as Carl D. Evans, Bill T. Arnold, Mario Liverani, Joan Goodnick Westenholz, and Dale Launderville have examined Naram-Sin's character as *Unheilsherrscher*. Evans insists that "the Jeroboam of tradition is Israel's historiographical counterpart to the Naram-Sin of Mesopotamia's *Unheilsherrscher* traditions."²²⁰ As Arnold investigated the Weidner Chronicle, he found that scribes in the Old Babylonian Period reused Naram-Sin's character to reinforce fish offerings for Marduk in Babylon.²²¹ Liverani is also interested in the function of the Naram-Sin stele (*narû*).²²² He argues that during the Old Babylonian period the scribes of Nippur and Ur copied these inscriptions "because of their paleographic peculiarities and antiquarian value, but above all because of their

²¹⁹ Longman III, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography*, 212.

²²⁰ Evans, "Naram-Sin and Jeroboam," 114.

²²¹ Bill T. Arnold, "The Weidner Chronicle and the Idea of History," in *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context*, ed. A. R. Millard, J. K. Hoffmeier, and D. W. Baker (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 129-148.

²²² Mario Liverani, "The Book of Kings and ancient Near Eastern Historiography" in *The Book of Kings and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, ed. André Lemaire, Baruch Halpern, and Matthew J. Adams, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 181.

historical interest.”²²³ He further avers that “Babylonian scribes also engaged in the production of pseudo-historical texts dealing with the kings of Akkad, not by chance generally in the form of fake steles (*narû*) in which an ancient king speaks in the first person.”²²⁴ In a similar vein, as Westenholz draws attention to its didactic character, she insists that “it is basically not to entertain but to educate people, to inform them about an important fact, to arm them against danger within their own cultural environment.”²²⁵ Launderville also assumed that “Kings who read the Cuthean Legend would have been reminded of the importance of obeying the instructions of the gods in the omens and also would have been counseled against political expansionism.”²²⁶ Presumably, the Cuthean Legend is functioned as a genre for Mesopotamian scribes to legitimize their kingship. Thus, in the first part and last part of *the Cuthean legend*, we can observe that the text should be read aloud for future kings:

1. Open the tablet-box and read out the stela,
 2. [Which I, Naram-Sin], son of Sargon,
 3. [Have inscribed and left for] future days...
177. You who have read my inscription.
178. And thus have gotten yourself out (of trouble),
179. you who have blessed me, may a future (ruler).

²²³ Liverani, “Book of Kings,” 181.

²²⁴ Liverani, “Book of Kings,” 181.

²²⁵ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 23.

²²⁶ Launderville, *Piety and Politics*, 325.

180. Bless you!” (the Cuthean Legend, lines 177–180).²²⁷

Thus, the *narû* literature as political propaganda is designed not only to educate future kings, but also to legitimize the current kingship to those who listen it.

The standard version of the Cuthean Legend which is bound on Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian tablets from the library of Ashurbanipal preserves a narrative in which we can catch several motifs such as the hubris of Naram-Sin and divine absence.²²⁸ The first section (lines 1–30) of the Cuthean Legend is about Enmerkar, the king of Uruk and his sin. Without reason, Shamash, the solar deity, changed to rule Uruk (line 9). To avoid disaster, Enmerkar summoned diviners but received negative omens from the lambs (lines 14–15). In the end, his army is annihilated by the ghosts as Shamash’s judgments (lines 25–28). It is noteworthy that Naram-Sin emphasizes Enmerkar’s sin which “he did not make a name for himself so that I could not pray for him” (line 30).²²⁹ With respect to Enmerkar’s sin, Westenholz assumes that Enmerkar’s grave sin was his disobedience to the omen he received.²³⁰ Perhaps, since Enmerkar did not write a *narû* stele to warn Naram-Sin about the obedience of omens, Naram-Sin treated him as a sinful king.

In the next section (lines 31–62), by disapproving divine omens, Naram-Sin’s image arises as sacrilegious character. Since the Babylonian gods (Tiamat and Bēlet-ilī) created Naram-Sin’s opponents, it is inevitable that the omens by diviners are negative. In contrast to the Middle Babylonian recension’s “six kings,” “seven kings” with barbarian hordes came to destroy

²²⁷ Westenholz’s translation, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade*, 301, 331.

²²⁸ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 294–95.

²²⁹ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 307.

²³⁰ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 294.

Akkade (line 37). To protect his city, Naram-Sin decided to check whether their body is divine or not (lines 63–71). After a scout pricked them with the pin and found them as human beings (line 71), like Enmerkar, Naram-Sin summoned diviners and let them perform extispicy (lines 72–83). The result of extispicy is negative (line 78). Nevertheless, Naram-Sin sent out his troops three times against the hordes and his troops were annihilated (lines 84–87). In the wake of wars, Naram-Sin himself confesses his faults. Through his introspection, we can assume that scribes intentionally devised Naram-Sin’s negative character:

88. I was bewildered, confused, sunk in gloom, desperate, and dejected.

89. Thus I said to my heart, these were my words:

90. “What have I left to the dynasty!?”

91. “I am a king who does not keep his country safe

92. “and a shepaherd who does not safeguard his people.

93. “How shall I ever continue to act so that I can get myself out (of this)!?”²³¹

However, Naram-Sin’s soliloquy above is different from his royal inscription from Basekti:

(9) Naram-Sin. (*bricks at Nagar*)

(10) Naram-Sin (*variant inserts: the mighty*), king of the four quarters of the earth.

(11) Naram-Sin, builder of the Temple of Enlil (or: Temple of Ishtar, Sin). (*bricks and brick stamps from Nippur, Adab, Girsu*)

(12) Naram-Sin the mighty, king of the four quarters of the earth, conqueror of Armanum and Ebla. (*stone vases at Babylon, Susa and elsewhere*)²³²

²³¹ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 319.

Evans argues that “midway through his reign the title king of the four quarters appears on his inscriptions and becomes henceforth a title commonly claimed by all those kings who proudly aspired to universal dominion from a Mesopotamian base.”²³³ Furthermore, Naram-Sin proclaimed himself as “a god of Akkad.” In his victory stele, now in the Louvre Museum in Paris, he wears “the insignia of royalty—bow, arrow, and battle ax—as well as the symbol of divinity.”²³⁴ An inscription on a bronze statue found near Dohuk in northern Iraq describes that “the people begged the major gods to make him the god of their city Agade and they built him a temple in the midst of Agade.”²³⁵ With respect to his divine kingship, Hans J. Nissen insists that “by the act of deification, he placed himself in the position of being able to enjoy all the rights of the city god.”²³⁶ In contrast to his divine kingship, scribes not only accentuated his weak personality, but also criticized him as an unqualified leader for his people.

In the last section (lines 149–180), by introducing a didactic form, scribes warn for future rulers not to defy divine decision. It is noteworthy that the *narû* inscription functioned as propaganda through which readers can read aloud and listen:

151. I made a tablet-box for you and inscribed a stela for you.

²³² Benjamin R. Foster’s translation, see Foster, *The Age of Agade*, 318; Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000-323 BC* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2016), 68; Mario Liverani, *The Ancient Near East: History, Society and Economy*, trans. Soraia Tabatabai (New York: Routledge, 2014), 144.

²³³ Evans, “Naram-Sin and Jeroboam,” 110.

²³⁴ Florin Curta, “Reign of Naram-Sin of Akkad (2254–2218 BC), The First Ruler to Think of Himself as God,” in *Great Events in Religion: An Encyclopedia of Pivotal Events in Religious History*, ed. Florin Curta and Andrew Holt (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016), 18–19.

²³⁵ William H. Stiebing Jr., *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 74–75.

²³⁶ Hans J. Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.*, trans. Elizabeth Lutzeier and Kenneth J. Northcott (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 173.

152. In Kutha, in the Emeslam,
153. in the cella of Nergal, I left (it) for you.
154. Read this stele!
155. Hearken unto the words of this stele!²³⁷

By reading Naram-Sin's sacrilegious events in the Cuthean Legend, scribes expect future rulers to learn from his faults: when rulers defy their deities, the deities themselves destroy their city. In this respect, Liverani notes that "the success or failure of kings is explained by their pious or impious behavior, by their capability of listening to the advice coming from the gods."²³⁸ We can also find this perspective in the Weidner Chronicle which was found at Sippar in a complete Neo-Babylonian temple library. The chronicle reused Naram-Sin's literary character in the Cuthean Legend to highlight the worship for Marduk in Babylonia and to admonish current rulers:

1. Say to King [Apil(?)]-Sin, ki[ng of Baby]lon(?), thus speaks Damiq-ilišu(?-or Enlil-bani), king of Isin:
2. [] like []...his reign.
3. I wrote to you words of wisdom, words []. You did not take them to heart.
4. You did not listen or bend your ear to the instruction I gave you.
5. You did not heed the choice advice that [], and you are pursuing other purposes.
6. To do you a favour..., but it is not in your heart.

²³⁷ Westenholz, *Kings of Akkade*, 327.

²³⁸ Mario Liverani, "The Deeds of Ancient Mesopotamian Kings," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson (New York: Scribner, 1995), 2364.

7. For your own benefit, I advised (?) you to strengthen the discipline of your army (?) till distant days, but you did not consolidate (?) it in your hands.

.....

20. Naram-Sin defiled the people of Babylon. Twice he called up the horde of Gutium against it.

21. his people as with a goad... he gave his sovereignty to the horde of Gutium.

22. Gutium was as oppressive people. They did not know divine worship rites and regulations they did not know how to perform properly.

23. [Utuhegal] the “fisherman” caught fish as offering-presents on the edge of the seacoast.

24. Until that fish was offered to the [Lord Prince] Marduk, it was not offered to any other god.²³⁹

As Farouk Al-Rawi points out, the title of Marduk, “King of the gods,” in the Weidner Chronicle is anachronistic since the epithet was not used earlier than the Kassite period (1595–1157 BCE).²⁴⁰ Moreover, Naram-Sin did not worship Marduk but Enlil. Arnold insists that “the author used the former kings in the chronicle section as illustrations of rulers who failed to heed the advice proffered in the opening section.”²⁴¹ While the Cuthean Legend introduces Naram-Sin’s negative behavior against Enlil and other deities and thus ends with admonitions for future rulers, the Weidner Chronicle introduces admonitions for current rulers and teaches them Naram’s sinful act against Marduk. Thus, as scribes preserved the Cuthean Legend in Akkadian and Sumerian

²³⁹ Farouk Al-Rawi’s translation, Farouk N. H. Al-Rawi, “Tablets from the Sippar Library I: The ‘Weidner Chronicle’: A Supposititious Royal Letter Concerning a Vision,” *Iraq* 52 (1990): 10.

²⁴⁰ Al-Rawi, “Tablets from the Sippar Library I,” 2.

²⁴¹ Arnold, “The Weidner Chronicle,” 132.

versions in their curriculum for a long time, they also used Naram-Sin's character in their different traditions.

3.4. The Five Sumerian City Laments

With regard to Sumerian city laments, most scholars have agreed that there are five major city laments, written in the Sumerian dialect Emegir²⁴²: The Lament over Ur (LU),²⁴³ The Lament over Sumer and Ur (LSUr),²⁴⁴ The Lament over Uruk (LW),²⁴⁵ the Lament over Eridu (LE),²⁴⁶ and The Lament over Nippur (LN).²⁴⁷ Scholars have considered that their historical setting reflects the fall of the Ur III dynasty by the Elamites and Šimaški in 2004 BCE because LSur especially portrays the capture of Ibši-Sin, the last king of Ur III dynasty.²⁴⁸ According to Margaret W. Green, they were composed during the period of the Isin dynasty (2017–1985 BCE) and recopied in the Old Babylonian scribal school curriculum but “eventually disappeared in the course of the general reformulation of the Sumero-Akkadian literary repertoire.”²⁴⁹ More

²⁴² But Nili Samet also insists that “the parts written in Emesal are usually parts that quote the direct speech of a lamenting goddess; the rest of each lament generally uses the main dialect.” See Nili Samet, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014) 2.

²⁴³ Samuel K. Kramer, “Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur,” *Assyriological Studies* 12 (1940); Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*.

²⁴⁴ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*.

²⁴⁵ Margaret W. Green, “The Uruk Lament,” *JAOS* 104 (1984): 253–79.

²⁴⁶ Margaret W. Green, “The Eridu Lament,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 30 (1978): 127–67; Ilan Peled, “A New Manuscript of the Lament for Eridu,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 67 (2015): 39–43.

²⁴⁷ Steve Tinney, *The Nippur Lament: Royal Rhetoric and Divine Legitimation in the Reign of Išme-Dagan of Isin (1953-1935 B.C.)* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1996).

²⁴⁸ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 1–3.

²⁴⁹ Green, “Eridu Lament,” 127.

importantly, it is observed that LW, LE, and LN highlight the role of king to legitimize the Isin dynasty.

Since Samuel Noah Kramer published *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (LU) in 1940, Sumeriologists have not only vigorously investigated its historical setting, but have also translated other city laments such as LSur, LE, LW, and LN.²⁵⁰ Building upon Kramer's translation, Thorkild Jacobsen and Adam Falkenstein examined the historical setting of Sumerian city laments and proposed that the Sumerian city laments were composed during the restoration process of the temple of Ur, i.e., during the fall of the Ur III dynasty by an Elamite invasion (2004 BCE) and the period of Lipit Ištar (1934–1924 BCE), the time of Išme-Dagan's son.²⁵¹ In 2014, Nili Samet published her new translation of LU with a philological commentary, based on 92 manuscripts.²⁵² Here she has further examined liturgical features in LU. At the outset, Kramer and Jacobsen labeled another city lament for Sumer and Ur, on forty-seven tablets, as *The*

²⁵⁰ Samuel N. Kramer, "Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur," *Assyriological Studies* 12 (1940); W. D. McHardy and D. Winton Thomas, eds., *Hebrew and Semitic Studies: Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday, 20 August 1962* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Margaret W. Green, "The Eridu Lament," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 30 (1978): 127–67; Margaret W. Green, "The Uruk Lament," *JAOS* 104 (1984): 253–79; Michalowski, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*; Paul W. Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion: A Study of the City-Lament Genre in the Hebrew Bible* (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1993); Steve Tinney, *The Nippur Lament: Royal Rhetoric and Divine Legitimation in the Reign of Išme-Dagan of Isin (1953-1935 B.C.)* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1996); Walter C. Bouzard, *We Have Heard with Our Ears, O God: Sources of the Communal Laments in the Psalms* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Donna L. Pettey, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); Nili Samet, *The Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014); Ilan Peled, "A New Manuscript of the Lament for Eridu," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 67 (2015): 39–43; Randall Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah: Destruction and Lament in the Holy Cities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Sumerian city laments adapted their forms in to the *balag* and *eršemma* compositions until the Seleucid era. For a discussion of *balag* and *eršemma* see Mark E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: the Eršemma* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1981); Uri Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts of the Gods: Sumerian Emesal Prayers of the First Millennium BCE* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014); Gabbay, *The Eršema Prayers of the First Millennium BC* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015).

²⁵¹ Jacobsen, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 219–224; Falkenstein, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 320–24. In her recent translation, Nili Samet criticizes that Jacobsen erroneously identified laments of LU with *balag*. See Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 32.

²⁵² Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*.

Second Lamentation for Ur because it has no ancient title. However, scholars have reconstructed the lament and relabeled as The Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur (LSUr). In 1989, Piotr Michalowski published his new translation of LSur and examined its historical setting.²⁵³ H. L. J. Vanstiphout argues that LSU and LSur are the primary phase of city lament genre.²⁵⁴ Michalowski follows Vanstiphout and suggests that “LSUr used much of the structure of the Curse of Agade, but reshaped it for new purposes.”²⁵⁵ It is significant that LSur (Line 35) describes the Elamites’ capture of Ibbi-Sin, the king of Ur III dynasty (2028–2004 BCE). Thus, Michalowski suggests that LSur purports to deal extensively with the last event of the Ur III dynasty.²⁵⁶ In 1978, Margaret W. Green published The Eridu Lament (LE) based upon her doctoral dissertation, “Eridu in Sumerian Literature.”²⁵⁷ She says that in LE, we can observe that Eridu’s patron deities Enki and Damgalnunna mourned over their destroyed city with a specific description of their destroyed shrine. The last section of LE describes a humble man who soothes An, the king of the gods and restores his temple. More recently, Ilan Peled’s new translation of the ninth manuscript of LE notes that Eridu’s patron deities themselves destroyed their cities.²⁵⁸ Green’s translation of The Lament over Uruk (LU) describes that the divine counsel decided to

²⁵³ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*.

²⁵⁴ Herman L. J. Vanstiphout, “‘I Can Put Anything in Its Right Place’: Generic and Typological Studies as Strategies for the Analysis and Evaluation of Mankind’s Oldest Literature,” in *Aspects of Genre and Type in Pre-Modern Literary Cultures* (Groningen: Styx, 1999), 79–99.

²⁵⁵ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 8–9.

²⁵⁶ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 3.

²⁵⁷ Regarding her unpublished dissertation, see Margaret W. Green, ‘Eridu in Sumerian Literature,’ Ph.D Thesis submitted to the University of Chicago (Chicago, 1975).

²⁵⁸ Ilan Peled, “A New Manuscript of the Lament for Eridu,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 67 (2015): 39–43.

destroy all mankind as the intended victim.²⁵⁹ More importantly, LU (line 12.9) identifies a humble man of LE with Išme-Dagan. Since S. Langdon published a piece of the Nippur Lament (LN) in 1919, Kramer eventually presented a full description of the Lament in 1969.²⁶⁰ In 1996, Steve Tinney published the Nippur Lament in which he insists that “LN might include a coronation of Išme-Dagan in Nippur or the dedication of one of the ritual objects created for the shrines of the city.”²⁶¹

In particular, it is noteworthy that LW, LN, and LE emphasize the role of king in a restored temple. As discussed above, while the Curse of Agade depicts the reason of divine abandonment because of Naram-Sin’s sacrilege against Enlil, the five Sumerian city laments do not explicitly describe the reason of Enlil’s destruction over their cities. Nevertheless, given LW, LN, and LE’s primary concern for Išme-Dagan’s role as a rebuilder for a restored temple, the king’s piety plays an important role in the return of their patron deities. To explain the role of king in the Sumerian city laments, scholars have argued that Sumerian scribes composed their laments to legitimize their king. Green asserts that “the city laments which were composed during this era, like many other early Old Babylonian hymns, may be viewed as royal propaganda to curry divine and popular favor.”²⁶² Similarly, Michalowski also insists that LSUr as political propaganda was composed to legitimize Išbi-Erra, the first king of the Isin dynasty. He notes:

²⁵⁹ Margaret W. Green, “The Uruk Lament,” *JAOS* 104 (1984): 253–79.

²⁶⁰ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 6.

²⁶¹ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 82.

²⁶² Green, “Uruk Lament,” 253.

The important thing to keep in mind, however, is the fact that during the reign of the first king of the Isin dynasty, there was a concentrated effort to provide a form of *apologia* for the new royal lineage and the new seat of power. *LSUr* undoubtedly played a part in these ideological posturings, and even if we cannot in any way prove that it was composed at the time of Išbi-Erra, the text was undoubtedly part of the attempt to legitimize the new dynasty.²⁶³

Particularly, Tinney argues that the Nippur scribal schools composed LN to “strengthen both Išme-Dagan’s power base and his claim to be the legitimate successor of the Ur III rulers.”²⁶⁴

Like Michalowski, Tinney also compared the Curse of Agade with LN to investigate the political purpose of LN. He asserts:

The relationship between *CA* and *LN*, then, is not one of positive comparisons, but of negative: *CA* shows how *not* to react when faced with adversity brought down by the gods, whereas *LN* offers a paradigm for behavior in the face of such odds, and an intimation that to follow that paradigm is to bring blessings upon oneself and one’s subjects. By following the procedure detailed in *CA* one can be sure of eternal devastation: by following the instructions of *LN*, adversity can be overturned and restoration ushered in.²⁶⁵

Indeed, in *CA*, Naram-Sin destroyed Enlil’s temple, Ekur. Due to his sacrilege, his patron deities abandoned their own city, Agade and even cursed it. In contrast to his negative royal image, *LN* and *LW* presents Išme-Dagan as a faithful leader who rebuilds Enlil’s temple. As Tinney points out, the Išme-Dagan A text, a composition of around 560 lines, indicates that Išme-Dagan attempted to restore shrines in Nippur and thus satisfied the gods of the Nippur cult.²⁶⁶ Tinney

²⁶³ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 7.

²⁶⁴ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 10.

²⁶⁵ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 36.

²⁶⁶ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 37-39.

further argued that “he even installed one of his daughters, Tudanapšum, as the high-priestess of Enlil in Nippur, and one of his sons, the crown-prince, Šar-kali-šarri, as the city’s governor.”²⁶⁷ For this reason, the Nippur scribal schools actively promulgated Išme-Dagan’s hymns and the Nippur lament to strengthen the kingship of the Isin dynasty. For example, the unusual number of hymns regarding Išme-Dagan’s royal image suggests that Išme-Dagan became their positive role model for the legitimacy of the Isin dynasty.²⁶⁸

3.5. Emesal Prayers: Balaĝ, Eršemma, Eršahuga, and Šuilia

Most scholars have generally agreed that the Sumerian city laments were no longer copied after the Old Babylonian period (ca. 2000–1600 BCE) but adapted their forms into Emesal prayers until the Seleucid era because of their religious features.²⁶⁹ The so-called Emesal prayers consist of four lament genres in the Sumerian dialect Emesal, not Emegir: Balaĝ (the genre is named after a musical instrument, perhaps a drum), Eršemma (the genre is named after šem drum instrument that accompanied its ritual performance), Eršahuga (“Lament for the appeasement of the heart”), and Šuilia (“prayer of hand-raising”).²⁷⁰ Over the past three decades, scholars have mainly focused on Balaĝ and Eršemma compositions. However, more recently, as

²⁶⁷ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 58.

²⁶⁸ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 10.

²⁶⁹ Raphael Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea (a-Ab-Ba Hu-Luh-Ha): The History of a Sumerian Congregational Lament* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 1–7; Mark E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: the Eršemma* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1981), 11–44; Paul W. Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 25–61; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 13–14; Walter C. Bouzard, *We Have Heard with Our Ears, O God: Sources of the Communal Laments in the Psalms* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 61–74. Contra previous scholars’ opinions, Gabbay insists that some of Emesal prayers were performed during the third millennium. See Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts of the Gods*, 13.

²⁷⁰ Bouzard, *We Have Heard*, 91. For a detailed overview of Emesal prayers, see Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 5–9.

Uri Gabbay further examined other laments such as Eršahuga, and Šuilia, he renamed four laments genres as Emesal prayers because all of them include a prayer as “the heart pacification unit” in the last section.²⁷¹ The gala (Akkadian kalû) priests who are the main performers of the Emesal prayers,²⁷² recited Emesal prayers to appease the heart of angry gods. Of particular importance is that, like the Sumerian city laments, Eršahuga also emphasizes a king as a humble person to calm down the angry gods.

In the first millennium, since the Sumerian city laments have liturgical features, their structure and contents could survive in the form of Emesal prayers. Archaeologists and Assyriologists found extant Emesal prayers with Sumero-Akkadian bilingual compositions in the Assurbanipal’s library.²⁷³ Having analyzed their usage for public festivals and events, Assyriologists have concluded that the Old Babylonian scribal schools recopied and used them for a specific religious institution rather than for administrative documents.²⁷⁴ Raphael Kutscher argues that Emesal prayers are “chanted at ceremonies marking the demolition and rebuilding of temples”²⁷⁵ For example, a-ab-ba hu-luh-ha (Oh Angry Sea), which was edited in Nippur, indicates that “it was copied primarily for cultic use.”²⁷⁶ To investigate the ritual function of Emesal prayers, Mark E. Cohen extensively examined Emesal prayers in Assurbanipal’s library

²⁷¹ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 5.

²⁷² Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 63.

²⁷³ Cohen, *Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 13.

²⁷⁴ W. C. Gwaltney Jr., “The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature,” in *Scripture in Context: More Essays on the Comparative Method*, ed. William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 196.

²⁷⁵ Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea*, 6.

²⁷⁶ Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea*, 7.

in Nineveh and in the Seleucid translations.²⁷⁷ He argues that Emesal prayers were recited during the demolition of the Old temples as follows:

Two significant aspects of the ritual function of the balag lamentation may be discerned. Firstly, the lament was recited to the gods while the offerings and libations were being performed. Secondly, the chants were recited during the demolition of the old edifice, not during ceremonies commemorating the erection of a new structure. Thus, the balag lamentation served the same function as the offerings. It appeased the divine anger the city might incur while the workmen were tearing down sacred structure, albeit to erect new ones. It is interesting to note that a balag lamentation was recited on the fifteenth day of a ceremony for the covering of a sacred kettledrum. It is unusual that the lament was recited after the recovering process had been completed, rather than while the drum lay uncovered, in the process of repair, as with the temple wall and foundation. Moreover, in this ritual sacrifices and libations did not accompany the recitation of the lament. We wonder if, in this instance, the lament was sung to the accompaniment of the kettledrum as a means of testing the new drum.²⁷⁸

In addition to Cohen's argument, Dobbs-Allsopp insists that "they were used in namburbi or namburbi-like rituals to avert portended evil and recited regularly on fixed days of each month and during the akitu festival."²⁷⁹ Similarly, as Uri Gabbay further develops Cohen's argument, he argues that Emesal prayers were not only performed for building rituals, but also for various rituals, calendrical and non-calendrical to pacify gods.²⁸⁰ He notes:

Emesal prayers in the daily and monthly cult usually occurred within the temple in the cella of the deity, in front of his/her statue. The performance of Emesal prayers as part of

²⁷⁷ Cohen, *Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 11–44.

²⁷⁸ Cohen, *Sumerian hymnology*, 48–49; Cohen, *Canonical Lamentations of Ancient Mesopotamia*, 26–27.

²⁷⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 14–15.

²⁸⁰ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 158.

annual festivals was connected to the temple as well; often, however, the performance was not confined to one location, as in the daily cult, but involved a procession that was usually associated with the temple, i.e., leading to or from the temple or conducted within the area of the temple. Balaĝ and their accompanying Eršemma were the most standard prayers and could be performed in all types of rituals. They served as part of the regular daily temple cult, and were performed on special calendrical occasions as well.²⁸¹

Gabbay also insists that since the content of Balaĝ and their accompanying Eršemma was restricted within the temple area, scribes developed a new genre as Šuilia which added a passage about blessing the king who participated in the akitu festival.²⁸²

Among Emesal prayers, we can observe that Eršahuga highlights the role of king in the performance. According to Gabbay, “unlike the Balaĝ, Eršemma, and Šuilia genres, which focus on the city or temple, the subject of the Eršahuga is the individual.”²⁸³ For this reason, Gabbay compares Eršahuga with the city laments, especially such as the Nippur and Uruk Laments.²⁸⁴ In the Old Babylonian Eršahuga, an individual king asks for divine actions on behalf of the destroyed city.²⁸⁵ It is noteworthy that in Eršahuga a king performed his ritual to absolve his sin at the times of misfortune, thereby removing a catastrophe.²⁸⁶ Gabbay notes:

In the first millennium, communal catastrophe may be explained as the result of the sin of a king. Some first-millennium rituals mention the performance of Eršahugas by the king

²⁸¹ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 158–159.

²⁸² Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 287.

²⁸³ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 9.

²⁸⁴ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 13.

²⁸⁵ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 14.

²⁸⁶ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 24.

at times of misfortune. Pleas for the removal of sin are common in Eršahugas; it is likely that the king was held responsible for misfortunes that came or might come upon the land, and that the absolving of his sin would remove such misfortune. In addition, an OB Eršahuga and the Ur Lament, though not referring explicitly to the king, describe a catastrophe brought upon the land and the supplication of an individual, most probably the king (or the gala or other cultic personnel?), who asks for absolution for his sins.²⁸⁷

When the king performs Eršahuga, like the gala priests he plays an important role in the intercessory process in the heart pacification unit. Whereas the gala/kalû priests perform as mediators between human beings and the gods in Balaĝ, Eršemma, and Šuilia genres, the king himself perform an individual prayer Eršahuga with the assistance of the gala/kalû priests.²⁸⁸ It is interesting that during the individual prayer Eršahuga, the gala/kalû priests uncrown the seated king and tied his hands.²⁸⁹ In this respect, Gabbay argues that by adapting the role of king in the Sumerian city laments, Eršahuga portrays “the royal ideology of the king’s religious responsibility for his land and subjects.”²⁹⁰

3.6. The Relationship between Sumerian Literature and the Biblical Literature

So far, we discussed the role of king in Sumerian city laments and Emesal prayers. Now, we need to understand how the Mesopotamian literature is related to biblical literature thematically. Based upon Sumeriologists’ discoveries, biblical scholars have long examined the

²⁸⁷ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 24–25.

²⁸⁸ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 289.

²⁸⁹ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 174.

²⁹⁰ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 289.

relationship between the Sumerian city laments and Lamentations.²⁹¹ Scholarly discussion regarding laments in the biblical literature launched a debate about whether the biblical writer of Lamentations adopted the Sumerian city laments. Kramer first observed a close relationship between Lamentations and the Sumerian city laments. Kramer notes:

Just how deeply this mournful literary genre affected the neighboring lands is unknown, no lamentations have as yet been recovered from Hittite, Canaanite and Hurrian sources. But there is little doubt that the biblical *Book of Lamentations* owes no little of its form and content to its Mesopotamian forerunners, and, that the modern orthodox Jew who utters his mournful lament at the ‘western wall’ of ‘Solomon’s long-destroyed Temple, is carrying on a tradition begun in Sumer some 4,000 years ago, where ‘By its (Ur’s) walls as far as they extended in circumference, laments were uttered.’²⁹²

In 1963, C. J. Gadd published *The Second Lamentation for Ur*, which is now known as “The Lamentation over Sumer and Ur (LSUr).”²⁹³ Gadd has observed that the lamentations of Jeremiah contain thematic elements of the Sumerian city laments. For Gadd, the experience of the Babylonian Exile influenced the Jewish elites.²⁹⁴ However, building upon W. Rudolph and Otto Eissfeldt who challenged the influence of Sumerian city laments, Thomas F. McDaniel argues that the biblical writer had difficulty in adopting the Sumerian city laments because there

²⁹¹ C. J. Gadd, “The Second Lamentation for Ur,” in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver*, ed. D. W. Thomas and W. D. McHardy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 59–71; Thomas F. McDaniel, “Alleged Sumerian Influence upon Lamentations,” *VT* 18 (1968): 198–209; Paul W. Ferris, *The Genre of Communal Lament in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992); Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*; Walter C. Bouzard, *We Have Heard with Our Ears, O God: Sources of the Communal Laments in the Psalms* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Donna L. Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011); Randall Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah: Destruction and Lament in the Holy Cities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

²⁹² Samuel N. Kramer, “Lamentation over the Destruction of Nippur: A Preliminary Report,” *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969), 90.

²⁹³ Gadd, “Second Lamentation for Ur,” 59–71.

²⁹⁴ Gadd, “Second Lamentation for Ur,” 61 n.2.

is a gap between the second millennium Sumerian works and sixth century Hebrew poetry.²⁹⁵ However, based upon Mark E. Cohen and Raphael Kutscher's study of *balag* and *eršemmas* in the first millennium, W. C. Gwaltney responded to McDaniel's argument.²⁹⁶ He argues that "we can now fill the gap in time between the city-laments and biblical Lamentations with the lineal liturgical descendants of the city-laments, the *balag-eršemmas*."²⁹⁷

Biblical scholars have further examined such city laments in the prophetic literature. Following Gwaltney's argument, F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp compared the Mesopotamian city lament genre with Lamentations with nine major generic features: subject and mood, structure and poetic technique, divine abandonment, assignment of responsibility, the divine agent of destruction, destruction, the weeping goddess, lamentation, and restoration of the city and return of the gods.²⁹⁸ As Dobbs-Allsopp considers "the geological proximity of cultural areas within the ancient Near East," he argues that "two traditions were mutually influential."²⁹⁹ Then, he further explored some of the prophetic laments which resemble the Mesopotamian laments, especially in oracles against the nations.³⁰⁰ In particular, he insists that the *qînāh* meter in Ezekiel's lament over Tyre (Ezek 27:1–11, 26–36) and the dirge over Pharaoh (Ezek 32:1–16)

²⁹⁵ McDaniel, "Alleged Sumerian Influence upon Lamentations," 200.

²⁹⁶ W. Gwaltney Jr., "The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature," in *Scripture in Context: More Essays on the Comparative Method*, ed. William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer, and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 191–211.

²⁹⁷ Gwaltney, "Biblical Book of Lamentations," 210.

²⁹⁸ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 30–96.

²⁹⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 6.

³⁰⁰ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 97–156.

reflect the Mesopotamian laments.³⁰¹ Unfortunately, he did not extensively examine the book of Ezekiel with the nine features.

Similarly, Jason Radine analyzed the purpose and function of the book of Amos, while considering its relationship with the city laments.³⁰² Radine examined themes and motifs of the book of Amos and thus found that the major themes of divine destruction and abandonment in the city laments also appear in the book of Amos.³⁰³ Having analyzed the city laments, he concluded that the theme of divine abandonment in the city laments function as political agenda to legitimize new political authorities. Thus, he insists that “the book would have promoted an ideology of legitimization for Judah as Yahweh’s sole kingdom and host of thousands of northern refugees, as well as providing a literary venting and acknowledgement of Yahweh’s just wrath.”³⁰⁴ As Radine considers the book of Amos is designed as an “aural-performance” poem, he insists that like the city laments “the poems of the book of Amos might have been performed aloud for a listening audience, perhaps by more than one speaker.”³⁰⁵

Randall Heskett also examined the relationship between the city laments and the book of Isaiah.³⁰⁶ When scholars have compared the biblical literature with city laments, they have simply showed similarities and contrasts without considering its *Sitz im Leben*. However, based upon a form critical analysis, Heskett attempted to “clarify the oral traditions and genres that

³⁰¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 126–128.

³⁰² Radine, *Amos*, 140–69.

³⁰³ Radine, *Amos*, 130.

³⁰⁴ Radine, *Amos*, 169.

³⁰⁵ Radine, *Amos*, 169.

³⁰⁶ Randall Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah: Destruction and Lament in the Holy Cities* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

housed city lament features.”³⁰⁷ Thus, he investigated “how the form and function of an ancient city lament may have operated at the oral level within a native Israelite literary genre.”³⁰⁸ For Heskett, throughout the book of Isaiah, indigenous Israelite prophetic oracles fit with various city lament features and motifs. For example, in his analysis of Isaiah 1:4–9, Heskett notes:

We should not be surprised that Dobbs-Allsopp found occasion to call this unit a city lament and yet his overlooking the form-critical dimensions causes him to neglect seeing how a native Israelite genre could house a city lament. Although the meter is difficult to determine in this passage, verse 4 emulates a lament in *qînah* meter and *hōy* clearly takes on the dual function of calling a nation to lament and opening an invective-threat oracle. Although destruction occurs in the Sumerian city laments because it is time for a new hegemony, in Israelite religion destruction is inevitable because of the sins of the people. Thus, a lament and judgment oracle may inhabit the same ancient Israelite form.³⁰⁹

In particular, Heskett asserts that the restoration section in the city laments is also found in the book of Isaiah. In Isa 44:24–45:13, Cyrus as YHWH’s instrument functions as a rebuilder like Išme-Dagan in the Nippur Lament.³¹⁰ However, Heskett often confused the name of the rebuilder as Išbi-Erra, the first king of the Isin dynasty.

Building upon Dobbs-Allsopp’s parallels of the nine features of Sumerian city laments with Lamentations, Donna Lee Petter also explored the external and internal influence of city laments on the composition of the book of Ezekiel.³¹¹ Her investigation consists of two parts. In

³⁰⁷ Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah*, 147.

³⁰⁸ Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah*, 2.

³⁰⁹ Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah*, 34.

³¹⁰ Heskett, *Reading the Book of Isaiah*, 120.

³¹¹ Donna L. Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

the part one, she traced external influences on Ezekiel “to understand the city lament genre first in Mesopotamian, and then Israel.”³¹² Then, in the part two, she analyzed the book of Ezekiel according to Dobbs-Allsopp’s nine major features. For Petter, Ezekiel’s geographical location in Nippur attests to his awareness of the Mesopotamian city laments. She argues that Ezekiel’s scroll regarding laments (קִנּוּיִם), mourning (הִתְנַחֵם) and woe (אֵי) (Ezek 2:10) is associated with the Mesopotamian city laments.³¹³ Thus, she asserts that “the lament framework illumines the main point of Ezekiel and enables the story to move forward.”³¹⁴ With regard to the weeping goddess, she argues that by eating the scroll Ezekiel himself plays a role as a weeping goddess. Petter notes:

As he absorbs the divine lamentation, Ezekiel is defined as the repository of laments, moaning, and wailing. Ezekiel becomes what he eats, and to make Margaret Odell’s use of the cliché even more precise, he becomes a mourner as a result of eating a scroll containing lamentation, moaning and woes. That is he becomes like the goddess who laments. What are written on the scroll are some of the words he is supposed to transmit.³¹⁵

Moreover, Petter proved that the restoration part of the Nippur lament can be found in the book of Ezekiel. When Dobbs-Allsopp examines the difference between Lamentations and the Mesopotamian city laments, he observes that in contrast to the Mesopotamian city laments, “Lamentations does not have a happy ending.”³¹⁶ On the other hand, the book of Ezekiel

³¹² Petter, *Ezekiel*, 6.

³¹³ Petter, *Ezekiel*, 143.

³¹⁴ Petter, *Ezekiel*, 145.

³¹⁵ Petter, *Ezekiel*, 55.

³¹⁶ F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Tragedy, Tradition, and Theology in the Book of Lamentations,” *JSOT* 22 (1997): 33.

includes the restoration of the temple in Ezekiel 40–48. This indicates that the literary structure of the book of Ezekiel is more closely involved in the Mesopotamian city laments than other biblical literature. However, Petter focused too much on Ezekiel's features as a mourner so that she ignored how Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest adapted the city laments with his own traditions.³¹⁷

3.7. The Thematic Structure of Sumerian Literature and the Book of Ezekiel

In this section, I will analyze how the book of Ezekiel thematically shares features of Sumerian city laments. When Sumeriologists analyze the structure of the Sumerian city laments, they consider each *kirugus* ('songs/stanzas'), respectively accompanied by a *gišgiĝal* (= 'antiphon').³¹⁸ According to Dobbs-Allsopp, "the *kirugu* forms the major structural rubric in the city laments."³¹⁹ On the other hand, the book of Ezekiel has no such rubric. Rather, the book of Ezekiel is organized by the chronological formulas (Ezek 1:1–3; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 29:17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; 32:17; 33:21; and 40:1).³²⁰ Regardless of their different structural devices, the book of Ezekiel reflects the six major thematic features of city laments: 1) destruction by a storm god, 2) assignment of responsibility, 3) divine abandonment, 4) the weeping goddess, 5) destruction of the Temple, and 6) restoration. It is noteworthy that while Lamentations omits the sixth feature, the book of Ezekiel includes two of the features,

³¹⁷ For a discussion of Ezekiel's priestly traditions, see Marvin A. Sweeney, "Ezekiel: Zadokite Priest and Visionary Prophet of the Exile," in *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature*, FAT 45 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 125–43; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2013).

³¹⁸ Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 3.

³¹⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 43.

³²⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 6–7; See also Tyler D. Mayfield, *Literary Structure and Setting in Ezekiel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010).

assignment of responsibility and restoration. In particular, the role of king in a restored temple in Ezekiel 40–48 alludes to the king’s role as organizer of ritual observance in the Sumerian city laments and Eršahuga. But scholars have noticed that there are contrasts between the Sumerian city laments and the book of Ezekiel. Above all, with regard to the assignment of responsibility, the book of Ezekiel emphasizes his people’s sins, especially their idolatry. On the other hand, most Sumerian city laments ascribe their destruction to their deities’ capricious decision. The exception is the Uruk lament, which depicts the reason of the destruction as the responsibility of humanity. Nevertheless, recent studies on Emesal prayers in the first millennium also highlight the sin of people, especially the sin of a king.

3.7.1. Destruction by a storm god

Both the Mesopotamian city laments and the book of Ezekiel portray the destruction of the city in similar ways. First of all, both of them use the contrast motif. When Dobbs-Allsopp describes a salient feature of the destruction by Enlil, he argues that the Sumerian poet explicitly compares the past with the present.³²¹ Before Enlil decided to destroy a city, the Sumerian poet introduces the glorious moment of the city. For example, LSUr depicts such a contrast motif as follows:

The city of Ur is a great charging aurochs, confident in its own strength,

It is the primeval city of Lordship and Kingship, built on sacred ground

To quickly subdue it like a yoked ox, to bow its neck to the ground,

³²¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 38–41.

(the gods) An, Enlil, Enki, and Ninmah decided its fate

Its fate, which cannot be changed, who can overturn it-

Who can oppose the commands of An and Enlil? (LSUr 52–57)³²²

Similarly, the contrast motif appears in the book of Ezekiel. Ezekiel 16 first portrays the glorious past of a personalized Jerusalem and then depicts its current destroyed status:

And you adorned with gold and silver and your clothing was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth. Flour, honey, and Oil. You ate. And you became extremely beautiful and prospered as queen. And your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty. For it was perfected through my splendor that I had bestowed upon you, declares the LORD YHWH. (Ezek 16:13–14)

And I will deliver you into their hands, and they shall throw down your mound and tear down your shrines. And they shall strip you of your clothing and take away your beautiful jewels. And they shall leave you naked and bare. And they shall bring a mob against you and they shall pelt you with stone. And they shall cut you with their swords. And they shall burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. And I will put a stop to your prostitution and you shall pay no more fees. (Ezek 16:39–41)

Likewise, the second portion of Ezekiel 19, one of the dirges in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 19; 26; 27; 38; and 32), first depicts a vine which has strong branches and towers highest among the leafy trees (Ezek 19:10–11). Regarding the identity of the vine, scholars have interpreted it as Judah.³²³ Its majesty reminds us of the glorious past of Judah. However, this mood changes in Ezek 19:13–14:

³²² Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 39.

³²³ Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 609.

And now it is planted in the desert, in a dry and thirsty land. And fire has gone out from a rod of her branches. It has consumed her fruit. And there remains in her no strong rod for ruling. This is a dirge. And it has become a dirge

Thus, by introducing the contrasting motif, Ezekiel attempted to accentuate Jerusalem's demise.

In addition to the contrasting motif, just as the Sumerian laments introduces enemies from the east as instruments of Enlil's wrath, so the book of Ezekiel also depicts Babylonians as YHWH's instrument. For example, LU and LSUr portray Šimaški and Elam as instruments of Enlil's wrath.

The people of Šimaški and Elam, the wreckers, counted its worth a mere half-shekel.

(LU 244)³²⁴

That (the soldiers of) Šimaški and Elam, the enemy, dwell in their place

That its shepherd be captured by the enemy, all alone,

That Ibbi-Sin be taken to the land of Elam in fetters. (LSUr 33–35)³²⁵

The people of Šimaški and Elam came from the east of the Ur III dynasty. In LU and LSUr, Enlil uses the foreign armies as his instrument to destroy Ur. As Nili Samet and Piotr Michalowski call attention to the historical setting of LSUr, they argue that Šimaški and Elam are involved in the destruction of the Ur III dynasty because two enemies captured Ibbi-Sin, the last king of Ur III dynasty.³²⁶ Likewise, in the book of Ezekiel, Babylonians appear as YHWH's instrument:

³²⁴ Samet's translation, see Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 67.

³²⁵ Michalowski's translation, see Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 39.

³²⁶ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 1–3. Contra Michalowski, Samet insists that LSUr reflects ahistorical because there is no historical evidence of two additional enemies such as

And the word of YHWH came to me, saying. And you, Ben Adam, mark out two roads for the sword of the king Babylon to come. From the same country, the two of them shall go forth. And cut off a signpost at the fork of the way of the city. Cut off. Mark out the road for the sword to come to Rabbah of the Ammonites and Judah in fortified Jerusalem. For the king of Babylon has stood at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to perform divination. He has shaken the arrows, asked teraphim, and saw (inspected) the liver. In his right hand came up the divination Jerusalem – to set up battering rams, to open the mouth with a shattering, to raise the battle cry, to set up battering rams against the gates, to pour out mound to build siege works. And it will happen to them like a false divination in their eyes. Those who have sworn by the solemn oaths. But he will bring the iniquity to remembrance to be captured. Therefore, thus says the LORD YHWH. Because you have brought your iniquity to remembrance when you uncover your transgressions, to be revealed your sins in all your deeds – because you have brought into remembrance. You shall be captured by hand. And you profaned one, wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come in time of your final punishment. Thus, says the LORD YHWH: Remove the turban and lift off the crown! This shall not remain as it is. The lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be brought low. Ruin, Ruin, Ruin. I will make it. This has also not happened until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs, and I will give it to him. (Ezek 21:18–27 [MT 23–32])

Ezek 21:18–27 [MT 23–32] portrays the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar as YHWH’s instrument to fulfill His judgment against Jerusalem and Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. Commentators have argued that the text reflects the rebellion of Judah, Ammon, and Tyre against Babylon in 588 BCE (cf. Jeremiah 27–28).³²⁷ As the three kingdoms are closely

Gutium (LSUr 230, 489) and Tidnum (LSUr 256, 488) in the fall of the Ur III dynasty. See Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 6.

³²⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 443; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22A (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 448; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 110–11. For a discussion of the rebellion of three kingdoms against Babylon, See also Kathryn P. Darr, “The Book of Ezekiel,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, vol. NIB 6 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 1249, 1301.

associated with the Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus II (594–588 BCE), they rebelled against the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar.³²⁸ Before Nebuchadnezzar decided to attack either Rabbah Ammon, the capital of the Ammonites, or Jerusalem, he performed three divinations: shaking arrows, consulting teraphim, and inspecting the liver (Ezek 21:21). Here, his inspection alludes to Naram-Sin’s extispicy (CA 78). The result of his divination is to attack Jerusalem. From the eyes of Judean residents, such a divination is regarded as a false divination since they are confident that YHWH will protect their city from enemies (Ezek 21:28). However, by using the Hebrew particle לָכֵן “therefore,” Ezekiel emphasizes that the judgment by the king of Babylon is YHWH’s decision because of the guilt of Judeans (Ezek 21:29). Even in verses 30–32, as Ezekiel shifts from the third person address to the second person address, he directly rebukes the legitimacy of Zedekiah: the removal of his turban and crown.

Lastly, YHWH’s image as a stormy god in the book of Ezekiel alludes to Enlil as a storm god in the city laments and Emesal prayers. Enlil’s image as a destructive storm deity often appears in the city laments and Emesal prayers. However, the primary attribute of Enlil ‘Lord Storm’ is to provide fertility for Sumerians. According to Alberto R. W. Green, Enlil’s epithets are known as “King of all Foreign Countries,” “Father of the Gods,” and “God of Heaven and Earth.”³²⁹ As Green examines the historical background of Enlil as a storm god, he found that while the earliest Sumerian mythological texts depict Enlil as a beneficent storm god for fertility, there were also records that differently describe Enlil as a violent and malevolent storm god.³³⁰ For example, one of the Early Dynastic Hymns lauds Enlil who brings fertility:

³²⁸ Paul Joyce, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 136.

³²⁹ Alberto R. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 35.

³³⁰ Green, *Storm-God*, 282.

O mighty one, you who hold the rains of heaven

And the waters of the earth,

Enlil, you who hold the halter of the gods (of nature),

Father Enlil, you are the one

Who makes the vines grow up...³³¹

On the other hand, the Sumerian city laments and Emesal prayers depict Enlil's malevolent storm to destroy a city:

Enlil called the "storm-day"—the people moan

Days of abundance he took away from the land—the people moan (LU 173–174)³³²

To overturn the (appointed) time, to forsake the (preordained) plans,

The storms gather to strike like a flood.

To overturn the (divine) decrees of Sumer...

An frightened the (very) dwelling of Sumer, the people were afraid,

Enlil blew an evil storm, silence lay upon the city (LSUr 1–3; 58–59)

Enlil struck out with great ferocity. He proclaimed:

A devastating deluge shall be invoked...

³³¹ Green, *Storm-God*, 37.

³³² Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 63.

Its countenance shall be a malevolent storm that enshrouds heaven and earth

(LW 3.2–3.6)³³³

In Emesal prayers, the storm of Enlil appears as the word of Enlil. Walter Bouzard insists that “while the storm of Enlil serves as the dominant agent of destruction within the city laments, in balags the destructive power of the word of Enlil appears as the more prevalent image.”³³⁴ For instance, balag 5:1–4 depicts the word of Enlil like a storm: “His word touches the earth like a storm. Its meaning is unfathomable.”³³⁵

In a similar vein, while Ezekiel first portrays YHWH’s appearance as a storm theophany in Ezek 1:4, he also depicts YHWH’s violent storm in Ezek 13:11 and 13. The Hebrew noun רוּחַ סְעָרָה “storm wind” occurs three times in the book of Ezekiel (1:4; 13:11, 13).³³⁶ Ezek 1:4 depicts a storm theophany as YHWH’s appearance:

And I saw and behold! A stormy wind (רוּחַ סְעָרָה) is coming from the north — a huge cloud and fire flashing and surrounded by brightness. And in the middle of it (the fire) like gleaming amber in the middle of the fire.

Many commentators interpret YHWH’s stormy wind as a destructive enemy from the north. For example, Katheryn Pfisterer Darr interprets it as the movement of Mesopotamian troops toward northwest along the Fertile Crescent.³³⁷ Donna Lee Petter also argues that the stormy wind from

³³³ Green, *Uruk Lament*, 269.

³³⁴ Bouzard, *We Have Heard*, 79.

³³⁵ Bouzard, *We Have Heard*, 79.

³³⁶ BDB, 704.

³³⁷ Darr, *Ezekiel*, 1114.

the north is not an ordinary storm but a destructive enemy.³³⁸ However, Ezekiel does not explicitly depict any destructive storm image. For this reason, Margaret Odell suggests that Ezekiel's storm theophany seems more static than YHWH's destructive storm image.³³⁹ Nevertheless, we can assume that YHWH's stormy wind implies His destructive judgment through the usage of Ezek 13:11–13:

Say to those who are daubing on the plaster and it shall collapse. A shower is overflowing and you, hailstones, shall fall and a stormy wind (רוּחַ סְעָרָה) will break out. And behold! The wall collapses. Will it not be said to you, "Where is the plaster that you daubed on?" Therefore, thus says the LORD YHWH and I will let a stormy wind (רוּחַ סְעָרָה) break out with my wrath (חֲמָה) and a shower will be overflowing with my anger (אַף) and hailstones in rage (חֲמָה) to destroy.

By using the Hebrew noun רוּחַ סְעָרָה "storm wind," Ezekiel expresses YHWH's destructive judgment against false prophets. Furthermore, in order to highlight YHWH's destructive anger, Ezekiel associates the Hebrew noun רוּחַ סְעָרָה "stormy wind" with two Hebrew nouns חֲמָה "wrath" and אַף "anger."

3.7.2. Assignment of Responsibility

Scholars have long insisted that while Sumerian city laments attribute the responsibility of the destruction of their cities to their deities' capricious decision, the biblical literature highlights that YHWH brought His wrath on Jerusalem because of sin. But since they have mainly focused on the Sumerian city laments, they have failed to recognize that Emesal prayers

³³⁸ Petter, *Ezekiel*, 106–7.

³³⁹ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 18.

in the first millennium also emphasize the sins of humanity. Following Dobbs-Allsopp's thematical features, Petter also analyzed the book of Ezekiel but did not further examine the issue of sin in Emesal prayers.³⁴⁰

Dobbs-Allsopp has argued that the Mesopotamian laments assign responsibility for the destruction of the cities to the decision of the divine assembly rather than the fault or the sin of Sumerians.³⁴¹ For example, LSUr lines 26–32 portray the decision of the divine assembly:

After An had frowned upon all the lands,
After Enlil had looked favorably on an enemy land,
After Nintu had scattered the creatures that she had created,
After Enki had altered (the course of) the Tigris and Euphrates,
After Utu cast his curse on the roads and highways,
In order to forsake the divine decrees of Sumer, to change its (preordained) plans,
To alienate the (divine) decrees of the reign of kingship of Ur,
To defile the Princely Son in his (temple) Ekišnugal,
To break up the unity of the people of Nana, numerous as ewes,
To change the food offerings of Ur, the shrine of magnificent food offerings,
That its people no longer dwell in their quarters, that they be given over (to live) in
an inimical place,³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Donna L. Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel and Mesopotamian City Laments*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

³⁴¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 52.

Having analyzed the city laments, Dobbs-Allsopp concludes that Enlil has responsibility for proclaiming the decision of the divine assembly, regardless of the authority of An, the highest-ranking god.³⁴³ Indeed, while LW depicts a variety of deities in the first part (LW 1.7–1.11), Enlil himself executes the decision of the divine assembly:

...he stretched forth his hand; he induced terror in the land.

Enlil struck out with great ferocity. He proclaimed:

“A devastating deluge shall be invoked —

War! In front it shall be a...axe; in back it shall be a...;

Its scales shall be a harrow; its back shall be flames;³⁴⁴

Furthermore, Dobbs-Allsopp also insists that in contrast to Enlil’s destruction against Naram’s sacrilege in the Curse of Agade, Enlil’s destruction is arbitrary in the Sumerian city laments.³⁴⁵ Building upon Dobbs-Allsopp’s argument, Jeffrey J. Niehaus also argues that “Enlil and the gods abandon Ur simply because they have decreed an end to its imperium.”³⁴⁶ While most scholars argue that the Sumerian city laments ignored the responsibility of human beings, I found that they do describe the sin of humanity. For example, LW 1.4 introduces the issue of overpopulation: “... mortal man multiplied (to become) as numerous as the gods.”³⁴⁷ According to Margaret. W. Green’s commentary on the Uruk lament, the gods decided to destroy mankind

³⁴² Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 38–39.

³⁴³ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 52–53.

³⁴⁴ Green, *Uruk Lament*, 269.

³⁴⁵ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 53.

³⁴⁶ Niehaus, *Ancient near Eastern Themes*, 119.

³⁴⁷ Green, *Uruk Lament*, 265.

because “possibly the excessive human activity or noise have disturbed the gods’ sleep.”³⁴⁸ The role of human sin is implicit in the language of laments.

Emesal prayers in the first millennium explain the catastrophe on a city or personal distress on account of the sin of human beings or the sin of a king. According to Uri Gabbay, an Emesal prayer which is related to the destruction of Eridu by an enemy brought by Enki and Marduk connects the catastrophe on a city with the issue of sin: “What is the sin? What is the negligence?”³⁴⁹ Gabbay explains that these rhetorical questions presume that a god brought communal catastrophe because of sin.³⁵⁰ In particular, as we discussed above, Eršahuga calls attentions to the issue of sin in relation to the destruction of a city. Karen van der Toorn argues that “calamities are conceived as divinely contrived punishments in Mesopotamia.”³⁵¹ Van der Toorn insists that scribes wrote Eršahuga to mitigate an angry god because of sin, even unknown sin.³⁵² To illustrate this, he introduces one Eršahuga:

Mankind is foolish (lit. deaf), know nothing.

As many as they may be, what does (mankind) know?

He does not know whether he did evil or good.³⁵³

³⁴⁸ Green, *Uruk Lament*, 254.

³⁴⁹ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 24.

³⁵⁰ Gabbay, *Pacifying the Hearts*, 24.

³⁵¹ Karen Van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia: A Comparative Study* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1985), 56.

³⁵² Van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 94.

³⁵³ Van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 95.

Through the Eršahuga prayer, the Mesopotamians understood their catastrophe as a result of divine punishment, even though they do not recognize their specific sin.

The book of Ezekiel also considers the disaster of exile as the result of the Judeans' sins, especially their idolatry. In Ezek 5:5–17, Ezekiel explains YHWH's judgment against Jerusalem on account of their disobedience of YHWH's laws with greater wickedness than the nations. In particular, Ezek 5:11 focuses on idolatry in the sanctuary:

Therefore, as I live, says the LORD YHWH, surely because you defiled My sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations (תועבה) and I also, I will shear you and my eyes will not spare and I also, I will show no compassion.

Since the people of Jerusalem defiled YHWH's sanctuary with their idolatrous acts, YHWH decided to destroy His own people without compassion. Although Ezekiel does not describe their specific idolatrous acts in Ezekiel 5, he portrays their syncretic acts in detail with the Hebrew noun תועבה “abomination” in Ezekiel 8: סמל הקנאה המקנה “the image of jealousy which is provoking” (8:3-5), כל-גלולי בית ישראל “all idols of the House of Israel” (8:10), התמוז “the Tammuz” (8:14), and משתחויתם קדמה לשמש “bowing down to the sun in the east” (8:16).

In Ezek 7:25–27, Ezekiel further associates sinful acts of the Judean leaders with the wrathful judgment of YHWH. In proclaiming a day of YHWH's judgment, Ezekiel criticizes the religious and political leaders of Judah:

Terror is coming. And they shall seek peace but it will be in vain. Disaster will come upon disaster. And rumor will be upon rumor. And they shall seek vision from the prophet and instruction shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the elders. The king will mourn and the prince shall cloth with desolation and the hands of the people of the land will be disturbed. I will treat them according to their ways and with their judgments I will judge them. And they shall know that I am the LORD.

Judean leaders such as prophets, priests, elders, kings, and princes not only failed to keep the purity and holiness of YHWH's sanctuary, but also deteriorated YHWH's moral values. Because they are responsible for the Judeans' sin, YHWH's Judgment against Jerusalem is inevitable. Later on, from a social justice viewpoint, Ezekiel rebukes the Judean leaders again in Ezekiel 22.

3.7.3. Divine Abandonment

Just as Sumerian city laments depict their patron deities' abandonment of their city, the book of Ezekiel also portrays YHWH's voluntary exile from His temple, Jerusalem. In trying to understand the theme of divine abandonment in the Mesopotamian literature and the biblical literature, scholars have long examined extra-biblical materials.³⁵⁴ Morton Cogan extensively examined the theme of divine abandonment, especially in a variety of royal inscriptions of Neo Assyrian kings.³⁵⁵ According to Cogan's argument, Mesopotamian historiography depicts that a defeated people regarded their loss of the displeasure of their own patron deities, which caused "natural disaster and/or national destruction."³⁵⁶ Thus, he suggested that Assyrian conquerors

³⁵⁴ Bertil Albrektson, *History and the Gods*. (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1967), 24–41; Mordechai Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974), 9–41; John W. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians, 732-609 BC* (London: SCM Press, 1973), 60–66; Patrick D. Miller and J. J. M. Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord: A Reassessment of the "Ark Narrative" of 1 Samuel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 1–26; Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1991), 183–218; Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 136–41, 254–79; Niehaus, *Ancient near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2008), 116–37; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 45–51; John F. Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth: Divine Presence and Absence in the Book of Ezekiel* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 101–49; Daniel I. Block, "Divine Abandonment: Ezekiel's Adaptation of An Ancient Near Eastern Motif," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 15–42.

³⁵⁵ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 9–41.

³⁵⁶ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 11.

intentionally employed the theme of divine abandonment in order to justify their ravages.³⁵⁷ In other words, through their royal inscriptions which functioned as imperial policy, when Assyrian kings transferred statues of their conquered peoples to Ashur, they emphasized their dominance over their conquered people. Assyrian scribes portrayed the statues' transfer as the desire of the statues themselves because of their anger against their own people. Cogan's argument is also applicable to the Sumerian city lament, although he only draws attention to royal inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian period. Patrick D. Miller and Jimmy J. M. Roberts also follow Cogan's ideology but further examine the earliest practice of carrying off divine images in the period of the Isin dynasty.³⁵⁸ To illustrate this, Miller and Roberts insist that "Shu-ilishu of Isin (ca. 1984–1975 BCE) returned the statue of Nanna from Elam, where it had been carried earlier, after the fall of Ur, when the Ur III empire collapsed."³⁵⁹ They also suggest that "the victor uses the theology of the defeated, in a slightly variant form, to claim divine approval for his actions."³⁶⁰ Presumably, the theme of divine abandonment in the Sumerian city laments indicate a victor's theology, especially for the political propaganda of Isin dynasty. The book of Ezekiel also shares such a theological perspective, when he describes the mobility of *kěvôd* YHWH "the glory of YHWH." But his perspective is not for political propaganda of the Babylonian Empire, but for the new society under YHWH's sovereignty. The theocentric society requires the purification of YHWH's sanctuary. As a result, the abandonment of YHWH is inevitable because the sins of the Judean people defiled His sanctuary.

³⁵⁷ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 11.

³⁵⁸ Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 13.

³⁵⁹ Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 13.

³⁶⁰ Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 16.

The Sumerian city laments describe their patron deities' abandonment in detail. LU lines 1–35 portray that a variety of gods abandon their own cities:

He has abandoned his cattle-pen, his sheepfold—to the wind...

The wild bull has abandoned his cattle pen, his sheepfold—to the wind...

The lord of all lands has abandoned it, his sheepfold—to the wind...

Enlil has abandoned the shrine in Nippur, his sheepfold—to the wind...

Ninlil has abandoned the house Kiur, her sheepfold—to the wind...

.....

The queen of Uruk land has abandoned it, her sheepfold—to the wind...

Inanna has abandoned the house in Uruk, her sheepfold—to the wind...

Nanna has abandoned Ur, his sheepfold—to the wind...

Suen has abandoned Ekišnuĝal, his sheepfold—to the wind...

His spouse, Ningal, has abandoned it, her sheepfold—to the wind...

The lamma of the temple has abandoned it, her sheepfold—to the wind...

The lamma of the Etarsirsir has abandoned it, her sheepfold—to the wind...³⁶¹

When all deities left their cities, they also abandoned their own temple. But there is no portrayal of destruction before they abandoned their cities. Due to their abandonment, the destruction by Enlil's storm and foreign armies began. Regarding their departure from their city, Sumerian scribes portray their movement like the flying bird image: "Ningal, like a frightened bird,

³⁶¹ Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 55.

escaped her city” (LU 238).³⁶² Petter explains that “it is not uncommon in Sumerian poetry to image gods, people, or inanimate concepts by an avian metaphor.”³⁶³ Furthermore, when they abandon their city, the patron deities handed over their land to their enemies: “Inanna handed over (victory in) strife and battle to a rebellious land” (LSUr 63).³⁶⁴ It is noteworthy that the Eridu Lament depicts the patron deities who themselves destroy their city (LE 6:2'–27'):

The lord Nanna, the lord Ašimbabbar,

Destroyed his city Ur.

He decimated the country by famine.

He committed a sacrilege against the Ekišnugal. He struck at its heart.

In the late afternoon, in his holy holies, they call his name.

Gašananna, the queen of heaven and earth,

Destroyed her city Uruk.³⁶⁵

Thus, as we can see above, the Sumerian deities not only abandon their cities, they even destroy their city with their hands or enemies. Although the Sumerian city laments do not explicitly explain the reason of their abandonment, all of them highlight the wrath of their own deities. For this reason, the prayer of weeping goddess is required.

³⁶² Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 67.

³⁶³ Petter, *Ezekiel*, 18.

³⁶⁴ Michalowski, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur*, 41; Niehaus, *Ancient near Eastern Themes*, 118.

³⁶⁵ Green, *Eridu Lament*, 139.

The book of Ezekiel also explicitly presents the theme of divine abandonment through the mobility of *kěvôd* YHWH “the glory of YHWH.” The mobility of *kěvôd* YHWH in the book of Ezekiel is depicted as follows: the divine presence as the chariot throne vision in Ezekiel 1; the divine absence from the temple of Jerusalem due to its abominations in Ezekiel 8–11; and the divine presence in the new Temple in Ezekiel 40–48. In particular, Ezekiel 8–11 highlights the theme of divine abandonment because of the idolatry of YHWH’s people, which provokes YHWH’s anger. As we discussed above, a wide range of syncretic religious practices in Ezekiel 8 triggered YHWH’s wrath. However, instead of admitting their idolatries, seventy elders of the house of Israel comment about YHWH: “YHWH is not seeing us; YHWH has abandoned the land” (Ezek 8:12; 9:9).

Just as the Sumerian deities themselves destroyed their own people, so YHWH ordered six destroyers to destroy the inhabitants in the temple of Jerusalem, except those who received a mark on their foreheads in Ezekiel 9. To avoid the defilement of the sanctuary, YHWH decides to abandon His own temple in Ezekiel 10. It is noteworthy that like the flying bird image in the Sumerian city laments, Ezekiel 10 describes YHWH’s movement on the flying cherubim. At last, *kěvôd* YHWH ascends from the midst of the city and stands on the mountain which was in the east of the city (Ezek 11:23).

3.7.4. The Weeping Goddess

One of the most salient motifs in the Sumerian city laments and Emesal prayers is the weeping goddess motif. Kramer extensively investigated the weeping goddess motif from the

Sumerian city laments to the liturgic laments.³⁶⁶ For example, the patron goddesses such as Ningal (moon goddess of Ur), Inanna (Akk. Ishtar, goddess of fertility), Ninisinna (the patron deity of the art of medicine and healing), and Ninhursag (godmother of all human and animal life in the foothills and deserts of Akkad)³⁶⁷ weep for their cities, especially their lost cities. Kramer argues that Sumerian scribes devised the weeping goddess motif in the wake of the destruction of their cities by enemies in their dirges and motifs.³⁶⁸ Of particular importance is the portrayal of the weeping goddess as the Mater Dolorosa who lost her son. According to Kramer, her lost son signifies a lost city by enemies.³⁶⁹ Thus, by depicting her martyred son after destruction, scribes attempted to express their sorrow. Biblical scholars have examined how the weeping goddess motif as the personification of a city influenced the biblical literature, especially the use of בַּת-צִיּוֹן “Bat Zion, Daughter Zion.”³⁷⁰ In the book of Ezekiel, the Tammuz lament is a vestige of the weeping goddess (Ezek 8:14). Furthermore, Ezekiel uses the weeping goddess motif through the personification of Jerusalem. But in his viewpoint, Jerusalem is no longer the image of Daughter Zion but זֹנֶה “whore” (cf. Ezekiel 16 and 23).

³⁶⁶ Samuel N. Kramer, “The Weeping Goddess: Sumerian Prototypes of the Mater Dolorosa,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 46 (1983): 69–80.

³⁶⁷ Karen Van der Toorn, Bob. Becking, and Pieter W. Van der Horst, eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1995), 450, 452, 791.

³⁶⁸ Kramer, “Weeping Goddess,” 70.

³⁶⁹ Kramer, “Weeping Goddess,” 77–78.

³⁷⁰ Aloysius Fitzgerald, “Mythological Background for the Presentation of Jerusalem as a Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the OT,” *CBQ* 34 (1972): 403–16; Fitzgerald, “BTWLT and BT as Titles for Capital Cities,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 167–83; Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 75–90; Bouzard, *We Have Heard with Our Ears, O God*, 10–12; Adele Berlin, *Lamentations: A Commentary* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002); Carleen Mandolfo, *Daughter Zion Talks Back to the Prophets: A Dialogic Theology of the Book of Lamentations* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Michael H. Floyd, “Welcome Back, Daughter of Zion!,” *CBQ* 70 (2008): 484–504; F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter of Zion,” in *Thus Says the Lord: Essays on the Former and Latter Prophets in Honor of Robert R. Wilson*, ed. John J. Ahn and Stephen L. Cook, *LHBOTS* 502 (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 125–34; Petter, *The Book of Ezekiel*; Magnar Kartveit, *Rejoice, Dear Zion!: Hebrew Construct Phrases with “Daughter” and “Virgin” as Nomen Regens* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013).

In the Sumerian city laments, goddesses implore their high-ranking deities to avert their destruction on their cities. In LU 143–161, Ningal, Inanna’s mother, poignantly laments for Ur before An and Enlil decided to destroy her city:

On that day, I did not forsake my city,

I did not neglect my land;

I shed my tears before An,

I myself made supplication before Enlil.

“Let not my city be destroyed!” I said to them.

“Let not Ur be destroyed!” I said to them,

“Let not its people perish!” I said to them.

But An would not change that word,

Enlil would not soothe my heart with that “It is good; so be it.”³⁷¹

Although Ningal supplicates An and Enlil to appease their wrath twice, An and Enlil would not reverse their decision (LU 150–151; 160–161). After Enlil’s stormy destruction on Ur, Ningal bitterly weeps, even plucking out her hair, and beating her chest (LU 291–301):

I, Ningal, in place of my city, a strange house has been built.

Woe is me! The city has been destroyed, and the house has been destroyed.

Nanna, the shrine of Ur has been destroyed, its people smitten.

Woe is me! Where shall I sit, where shall I stand?

³⁷¹ Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 63.

Woe is me! In place of my city, a strange house is being built.

At their being removed from their place, from the plain, “Alas, my men!” I shall cry.

At their being removed from my city, Ur, “Alas, my city!” I shall cry.

The woman plucks out her hair as if it were Alfa grass.

Her chest, the holy drum, she beats; “Alas, my city!” she cries.

Her eyes well with tears, bitterly she weeps.³⁷²

Similarly, in the Eridu lament, as Dobbs-Allsopp points out, Damgalnunna, Eridu’s patron deity, “claws at her breast, claws at her eyes. She utters a frenzied cry. She held dagger and sword in her two hands. She tears out her hair like rushes, uttering a bitter lament” (LE 5:4–6).³⁷³ In contrast to the weeping goddess in LU and LE, it is noteworthy that the Nippur lament uses the personification of its temple so that the temple itself becomes a weeping goddess:

The true temple gave out (only) tears and lamentation to you.

It sings a bitter song of the proper cleansing rites that are forgotten!

The brickwork of Ekur gave out (only) tears and lamentation to you.

It sings a bitter song of the proper cleansing rites that are forgotten!

It weeps bitter tears over the magnificent rites and most precious designs which are desecrated. (LN 4:53–57)

³⁷² Samet, *Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur*, 71.

³⁷³ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 76; Green, “Eridu Lament,” 137.

As Dobbs-Allsopp calls attention to this, he argues that “this represents the extension of a minor stream of tradition found in the city lament genre.”³⁷⁴ Emesal prayers in the first millennium BCE also portray the features of the weeping goddess in the Sumerian city laments. But instead of Ningal, their main weeping goddess is Inanna. A wide range of Balaĝ and Eršemma compositions from the Old Babylonian period copies and First Millennium BCE copies indicate Inanna as the main weeping goddess: Old Babylonian copies 32, 34, 59, 60, 75, 88, 97, 165, and 175; First Millennium BCE copies 34 and 59.³⁷⁵

The portrayal of the weeping goddess motif in the feminine personification of their city led to scholarly discussion of the origin of בַּת־צִיּוֹן “Bat Zion, Daughter Zion.” Aloysius Fitzgerald argued that “in the West Semite area capital cities were regarded as goddesses who were married to the patron god of the city.”³⁷⁶ For Fitzgerald, since Phoenician cities in the Hellenistic age are represented as women wearing a turreted or walled crown,³⁷⁷ Bat “daughter” as an appositional genitive indicates that “Jerusalem was a royal goddess married to the patron god of the city.”³⁷⁸ By contrast, Dobbs-Allsopp rejects the argument that Bat is an appositional genitive.³⁷⁹ To understand its grammatical usage, Dobbs-Allsopp examined the Akkadian divine epithets: *mārat uri*, “daughter of Ur”; *mārat kullaba*, “daughter of Kullab”; *mārat urukki*, “daughter of Uruk”; and *mārat akkadeki*, “daughter of Akkad.”³⁸⁰ Based upon these Akkadian

³⁷⁴ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 77.

³⁷⁵ Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology*, 18–19.

³⁷⁶ Fitzgerald, “Mythological Background,” 405.

³⁷⁷ Fitzgerald, “Mythological Background,” 406.

³⁷⁸ Fitzgerald, “Mythological Background,” 415.

³⁷⁹ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 84.

³⁸⁰ Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter of Zion,” 128.

usages, he suggests that Hebrew Bat as a divine epithet is followed by geographical name (GN).³⁸¹ In other words, the Hebrew phrase Bat Zion as a genitive location can be translated as “Daughter of Zion.” Like the personification of the Nippur lament, the Hebrew poets in Lamentations also employed personified Zion as the weeping goddess motif. More recently, as Christle M. Maier considers Zion as a personified woman, she prefers the translation of Bat Zion as “Daughter Zion.”³⁸² For Maier, “the female personification of Zion emerged in pre-exilic times, in situations of military threat to the temple and the city from the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian empires.”³⁸³ Thus, YHWH as a father has responsibility to protect His daughter from the threats of two empires.

The book of Ezekiel also implicitly portrays the weeping goddess motif. For example, the women of Jerusalem weep for the Tammuz (Inanna’s consort; Dumuzi in Sumerian) in Ezek 8:14. Zimmerli argues that the Tammuz lament reflects the Neo-Babylonian mythological text, Ishtar’s descent to the netherworld (Inanna’s descent to the netherworld, Sumerian version).³⁸⁴ As I have argued elsewhere, the Tammuz lament is a popular city lament in which female mourners mourn for their abandoned deity, Tammuz, in order to bring him back to their city.³⁸⁵

³⁸¹ Dobbs-Allsopp, “Daughter of Zion,” 128.

³⁸² Christl M. Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion: Gender, Space, and the Sacred in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 62.

³⁸³ Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, 212.

³⁸⁴ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1–24*, 242–43. The story of “Inanna’s descent to the netherworld” portrays Dumuzi as king in his sheepfold. In this story, Inanna descends to the netherworld to meet her sister Ereshkigal, queen of the netherworld. Inanna’s absence from the land leads to the loss of produce in her city. In the netherworld, galla-demons asked Inanna for a substitute to replace her. When Inanna arises from the netherworld to look for a substitute, she chooses her husband due to her sense of jealousy.

³⁸⁵ Inchol Yang, “The Influence of Sumerian City laments on the Tammuz Lament,” *Bib* 98 (2017): 541–57. This study investigates why the Tammuz ritual in Ezekiel is similar to the Sumerian city laments for Dumuzi. In contrast to those who interpret women’s wailing for Tammuz as their supplication for fertility of the land, the Tammuz ritual reflects a longing for the return of YHWH after the fall of Jerusalem. The Sumerian gala priests recited their city laments for the imprisoned king Dumuzi. They wished Dumuzi’s return for the recovery of their

Inanna's weeping for Dumuzi in the mythological texts developed into the representative of the weeping goddess motif in the liturgy during the 6th century BCE. For instance, a Neo-Babylonian Tammuz lament written in Akkadian as late as the Seleucid period proves why people preserved Balaĝ and Eršemma compositions for use in their liturgies for a long time.³⁸⁶

O grieving (women) of Uruk,

O grieving (women) of Akkad, I am prostrate!

The goddess of Uruk wept,

whose attendant was gone,

The goddess of Uruk wept,

whose loincloth was snatched away,

The daughter of Uruk wept,

The daughter of Akkad was crying aloud.

The face of the daughter of Larak was shrouded

with the fringe of her garment.

The goddess of Akkad wept...

The goddess of Kesh wept...

The goddess of Dunnu wept....

Her cheeks were sore (from weeping),

city. The Israelite women introduced the Sumerian city laments in response to YHWH's disappearance, hoping for the recovery of his city, Jerusalem.

³⁸⁶ Wilfred G. Lambert, "A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 211–15; Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005), 822–23.

She was deprived of her husband,

in whom she delighted...³⁸⁷

Bel has deprived me of my consort, my beloved spouse...

Babylon, 15th of Elul, 25th year of Seleucus and Antiochus,

King of the lands.³⁸⁸

Based upon the lengthy colophon of this tablet, Wilfred G. Lambert argues that “the Neo-Babylonian Tammuz lament text survives in a single copy on a Late Babylonian tablet written on September 16 287 BCE.”³⁸⁹ As Benjamin R. Foster adds the voice of female lamenter in lines 1-2, the Neo-Babylonian Tammuz lament reflects that women recite Inanna’s Akkadian version, Ištar’s lament for Tammuz as mourning ritual.³⁹⁰

Moreover, the weeping performance by Ezekiel evokes the weeping goddess motif in the city laments. Petter argues that “Ezekiel seems to be portrayed much like the city goddess of the laments on account of the immense responsibility he has for Israel.”³⁹¹ Indeed, after Ezekiel ingested the scroll in Ezek 2:10, his weeping performance alludes to the performance of the weeping goddess in city laments. For example, YHWH commands Ezekiel to strike his hands and stamp his foot, even exclaiming an interjection “Ah!” (Ezek 6:11). In particular, in Ezek 11:13, after the death of Pelatiah, son of Benaiah, Ezekiel’s exclamation alludes to Ningal’s

³⁸⁷ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 822–23.

³⁸⁸ Lambert, “A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament,” 213.

³⁸⁹ Lambert, “A Neo-Babylonian Tammuz Lament,” 211.

³⁹⁰ Jerrold S. Cooper asserts that lamentation’s origins are in women’s funeral songs and thus the dialect of lamentation is a dialect associated only with women. See Jerrold S. Cooper, “Genre, Gender, and the Sumerian Lamentation,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 58 (2006): 44..

³⁹¹ Petter, *Ezekiel*, 67.

outcry to soothe Enlil's wrath: "And it happened. As I prophesied, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. And I fell down on my face and I cried with a loud voice and I said, "Ah, LORD YHWH! You are wiping out the remnant of Israel!" These gestures must be related to the weeping performance in the city laments.

In contrast to Jerusalem as "Daughter Zion" in Lamentations, the personification of Jerusalem is depicted as זונה "whore" (cf. Ezek 16 and 23). Ezekiel uses the marriage metaphor in the pre-exilic prophets (cf. Hos 1–3; Jer 13:20–27). He offers the most comprehensive and detailed description of the whore metaphor. With regard to the purpose of Ezek 16 and 23, Maier argues that "the spatial depiction of the female body denotes stages of deterioration of communal life in the city."³⁹² In other words, by depicting Jerusalem as "whore," Ezekiel indicts a moral responsibility of the citizen.

3.7.5. Destruction of the Temple

Both Mesopotamian city laments and the book of Ezekiel describe the destruction of the temple. Five Mesopotamian city laments include the destruction of the temple by Enlil's storm: the destruction of the Lamma temple (LU 26), the destruction of Kiš temple (LSUr 116), the destruction of Eridu temple (LE 2:1–19), the destruction of Uruk temple (LW 1.26), and the destruction of Nippur temple (LN 53–68). With respect to the destruction of inhabitants in the temple, the Nippur lament portrays as follows: "Because they piled up the young women, young men and their little children like heaps of grain, it cries 'Woe!' for them" (LN 66).³⁹³ Of

³⁹² Maier, *Daughter Zion, Mother Zion*, 213.

³⁹³ Tinney, *Nippur Lament*, 101.

particular importance is the portrayal of the destruction of the temple in the Eridu lament. While other city laments offer the portrayal of the destruction of their temple with very short lengths, the Eridu lament describes its portrayal in detail. Green notes: “the Eridu lament traces the path of destruction from the breaching of Eridu’s main gate, through residential quarters, to the temple, and into its inner sanctuary.”³⁹⁴ For example, kirugu 2 of the Eridu lament depicts the destruction of the temple by Enlil’s storm as follows:

It cut the lock from its main gate. The storm dislodged its door.

It stacked the people up in heaps

...destroyed it alone.

...it turned...into tears.

...defiled...

...It distorted its essence.

...It circled its walls. It overturned their foundations.

Throughout his city, the pure place the foundations were filled with dirt.

Its ziggurat, the shrine which reaches up to heaven, it tossed into a heap of debris.

Its awe-inspiring conjurer’s wand, proper instrument of a temple,

its raising became ineffective.

Its gate “Great Ziggurat of Heaven and Earth Covered with a Fiery Splendor,”

It cut down its shining door, broke through its bolt.

³⁹⁴ Green, “Uruk Lament,” 254.

It ripped out its doorframe. The Temple was defaced (LE 2:4–18).³⁹⁵

The book of Ezekiel includes such a portrayal of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem but has some differences. After the description of abominations and detestable worships in Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8, Ezekiel envisions the six destroyers and the heavenly scribe in Ezekiel 9. Like the portrayal of the piles of corpses in LN 66, Ezekiel also uses a similar expression: “Slaughter the old men, youth, and virgins, women and children for destruction.” (Ezek 9:6a). However, there is a difference between Sumerian city laments’ portrayal of the destruction of the temple and Ezekiel’s. While Ezekiel depicts survivors, who bear the mark (the Hebrew alphabet נ) in Ezek 9:6b, Enlil’s storms commanded the total destruction of the inhabitants in the temple: “But do not touch any person who bears the mark. And from my sanctuary you shall begin. And they began with the elders who were in front of the house” (Ezek 9:6b). Furthermore, while the destruction of the temple begins at the sanctuary in the book of Ezekiel, the Eridu lament portrays Enlil’s stormy destruction from the gate of Eridu into the sanctuary of Eridu.

3.7.6. Restoration

A final characteristic of the Mesopotamian city laments and the book of Ezekiel is restoration. W. C. Gwaltney argues that “the five laments do not all handle this theme in identical fashion, but in every case the gods’ return is indispensable to the plot.”³⁹⁶ Although all city laments depict the abandonment of their patron deities at the outset, they also highlight the

³⁹⁵ Green, “Eridu Lament,” 134–35.

³⁹⁶ Gwaltney, “Biblical Book of Lamentations,” 202.

return of their chief deities in the restored temple in the last part. Emesal prayers in the first millennium also follow this literary sequence and ends with a concluding prayer, so called “heart pacification unit.” The most important feature in city laments is the role of king in the restored temple. As we discussed above, LW, LN, and LE praise Išme-Dagan as a rebuilders for the restored temple, except LU and LSUr. Although the Eridu lament does not designate a humble person as Išme-Dagan to appease the wrath of deities (LE 21), the Uruk lament (LW 12.14–12.23) and the Nippur lament (LN 162–322) explicitly designate how Išme-Dagan rebuilds a new temple through his purification. Similarly, Eršahuga of Emesal prayers accentuates the ritual performance of king to appease the wrath of deities.

The book of Ezekiel also depicts the role of king in the restored temple in Ezek 40–48. But instead of the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ “king,” Ezekiel depicts the Hebrew noun נָשִׂיא “prince” in Ezekiel 40–48. Just as Mesopotamian city laments describe the ritual performance of king in the restored temple, Ezekiel portrays נָשִׂיא “prince” who brings offerings to YHWH in the restored temple (Ezek 44:3; 45:17; 45:22–23; and 46:2–3). The main theme of Ezekiel 40–48 is the return of the *kěvôd* YHWH in the new temple. In Ezek 43:1–4, the *kěvôd* YHWH returns from the east, passing through the eastern gate of the temple. In Ezek 43:7–9, the divine speech notes that the precondition of YHWH’s return is the purification of idolatries and corpses of kings in the new temple. In Ezek 44:1–3, Ezekiel depicts נָשִׂיא “prince” who sits inside the gateway to eat in the presence of YHWH. In Ezekiel 45–46, Ezekiel redefines the role of נָשִׂיא “prince.” נָשִׂיא “prince” no longer oppresses his people (Ezek 45:9) but brings ritual offerings to YHWH (Ezek 45:17; 45:22–23; and 46:2–3). With respect to the identity of נָשִׂיא “prince,” Iain M. Duguid comprehensively examined the use of נָשִׂיא “prince in the Hebrew Bible and its role in Ezek 40–

48.³⁹⁷ Duguid suggests that “Ezekiel intended by the term נָשִׂיךְ to convey a ruler with limited authority, genuinely representative of the people.”³⁹⁸ Similarly, Kalinda Rose Stevenson argues that “the Nasi has restrictions that the pre-exilic kings of Israel did not have.”³⁹⁹ Contra John Wright’s argument that “the prince exercises power as YHWH’s royal representative in the East Gate,”⁴⁰⁰ Stevenson argues that the role of נָשִׂיךְ “prince” is very limited not only because his territorial space is located outside the Temple space, but also because “he could not make permanent gifts of land to his servants.”⁴⁰¹ Daniel I. Block also agrees with Duguid and Stevenson: he insisted that “Ezekiel avoids מֶלֶךְ because in his mind the expression carries overtones of independence and arrogance, while נָשִׂיךְ expresses, more appropriately, the king’s status as a vassal of YHWH.”⁴⁰² In my view, since YHWH is a true king in the restored temple in Ezekiel 40–48, the role of king is inevitably limited. Like Išme-Dagan in the Nippur lament, נָשִׂיךְ “prince” brings ritual offerings to YHWH. Furthermore, in Ezekiel 40–48 Ezekiel negatively uses the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ “king” to depict idolatries of past kings and their oppression.

3.8. Summary

³⁹⁷ Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, VTSup 56 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 10–33.

³⁹⁸ Duguid, *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel*, 32–33.

³⁹⁹ Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 123.

⁴⁰⁰ Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 120.

⁴⁰¹ Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 123.

⁴⁰² Daniel I. Block, “Transformation of Royal Ideology in Ezekiel,” in *Transformation of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. William A. Tooman and Michael A. Lyons, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 127 (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009), 212.

In this chapter, I explored how Sumerian literature influenced the book of Ezekiel. Sumerian scribes use the theme of divine presence and absence for political propaganda to legitimate their current kingship. In order to legitimize the Ur III dynasty, priests for Enlil in Nippur explained the fall of the Akkad dynasty as Naram-Sin's sacrilegious destruction of Enlil's sanctuary, Ekur. Since Naram-Sin destroyed Ekur, Enlil decided to abandon Agade and even his patron deities cursed it. Old Babylonian schools preserved the Curse of Agade and the Cuthean Legend in Sumero-Akkadian versions, since Naram-Sin's sacrilegious behavior became a model of the evil king. Furthermore, the Weidner Chronicle introduces admonitions for current rulers and teaches them Naram-Sin's sinful act against Marduk. In contrast to Naram-Sin as an evil king in CA, Sumerian city laments highlight Išme-Dagan as a good king in the new restored temple. In other words, Sumerian scribes intentionally legitimize Išme-Dagan, the king of the Isin dynasty. Išme-Dagan rebuilds a new temple for his deities and brings new offerings to their deities. Because of Išme-Dagan's efforts to rebuild the new temple, his patron deities appease their wrath and returns to the new temple.

Similarly, Ezekiel's theological perspective that YHWH abandoned His own people because of their sin alludes to Sumerian scribes' political propaganda. However, Ezekiel's viewpoint is not political propaganda for the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Rather, Ezekiel emphasizes YHWH's true kingship in the new temple. King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon⁴⁰³ only

⁴⁰³ While Nebuchadnezzar occurs fifty-five times in 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, Nebuchadrezzar occurs thirty-three times in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. D. J. Wiseman argues that Nebuchadrezzar is "a near transliteration of the Babylonian royal name which is likewise written with various syllabic spellings *na-bi-um-ku-du**ur/dur/dúr/-ri/ru-ú/u-šu-úr/šur* or, more commonly in Sumerian with lograms (^dna.níg.du.uri or ^dna.níg.du.šeš) and this may indicate a closer contact with the name as pronounced." See Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 2–3. Contra Wiseman, Aaron Hornkohl insists that the shift from r to n in Nebuchadnezzar's name is evidence of the Late Biblical Hebrew because of the influence of the Aramaic language. See Aaron D. Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case for a Sixth-Century Date of Composition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 54–55.

occurs four times in Ezekiel (Ezek 26:7, 18; 29:18, 19; and 30:10). Ezekiel depicts his role as YHWH’s instrument to destroy Tyre and Egypt. But in contrast to Išme-Dagan, Nebuchadrezzar plays no role in rebuilding the new temple in Ezekiel 40–48. Since Ezekiel has in mind a true king as YHWH, no specific dynasty existed in the new temple. Thus, in Ezekiel 40–48, instead of using the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ “king,” Ezekiel prefers the Hebrew noun נָשִׁיךְ “prince.” Like Išme-Dagan in the Nippur lament, נָשִׁיךְ “prince” brings ritual offerings to YHWH.

With respect to the overall literary structure, the book of Ezekiel follows the Sumerian city laments. The six major themes of the Sumerian city laments influenced the literary structure of the book of Ezekiel as follows:

Table 1: Six major themes of the Sumerian city laments in the book of Ezekiel

Text	The divine agent of destruction	Assignment of responsibility	Divine abandonment	The weeping goddess	Destruction	Restoration of the city and return of the gods
The Sumerian city laments	Enlil as Storm Enemies as the Elamites against the black-headed people	CA: The hubris and sacrilege of Naram-Sin <i>Eršahuga</i> : Sin of kings and their prayer to appease the wrath of their deities	The departure of deities for their cities	The weeping of Ningal Or the weeping of Inanna	Elderly people and babies... They saw... they slaughtered... they tore out (2.29’–2.31’, The Uruk lament)	Supplication for the restoration of their city, the return of their deities and the heart pacification unit
The book of Ezekiel	YHWH as סְעָרָה “storm” (Ezek 1:4; cf. 13:11 and 13) Enemy as the Neo-Babylonians against the Israelites (Ezek 21:18–23. cf. Ezek 33:21)	Abominations of the Israelites (esp. Ezek 8:6, 9, 13, 15, 17)	YHWH’s abandonment of Jerusalem (Ezek 8:12; 9:9)	The Tammuz Lament (Ezek 8:14)	The six destroyers slaughter youth and maidens, women and children except those who bear a mark on their foreheads (Ezek 9:6)	YHWH’s return after the purification of the Jerusalem temple (Ezek 43:1–9)

As we can see in table 1, like the Sumerian city laments, Ezekiel located his themes. In general, the book of Ezekiel is organized by the chronological formulas (Ezek 1,1-3; 8,1; 20,1; 24,1; 26,1; 29,1; 29,17; 30,20; 31,1; 32,1; 32,17; 33,21; and 40,1). The first major chronological formula (Ezek 1:1–3) of Ezekiel 1–7 takes up YHWH’s chariot throne vision (Ezek 1:2–3:15)

and his three different commissions against Israel (Ezek 3:16–5:17; 6:1–14; 7:1–27).⁴⁰⁴ The second major unit (Ezek 8:1–19:14) draws upon “Ezekiel’s initial oracles following upon his vision of the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the people.”⁴⁰⁵ The final major unit (Ezek 40:1–48:35) portrays Ezekiel’s temple vision account concerning YHWH’s return (Ezek 43:1–9) and culminates in the role of the temple as a center of creation. In particular, the first subunit (Ezek 8:1–11:25) of the second major unit calls attention to divine abandonment: Ezekiel’s visionary journey in the temple and his portrayal of a variety of deities or abominations (Ezek 8:1–15), Ezekiel’s vision concerning the destruction of the city by six destroyers and the departure of YHWH (Ezek 8:16–10:22), and the purging of Jerusalem (11:1–23). Just as the Sumerian city laments portray the weeping goddess motif in the wake of divine abandonment, the first subunit of the second major unit (Ezek 8:1–15) depicts the Tammuz lament after the confession of seventy elders, “YHWH is not seeing us; YHWH has abandoned the land” (Ezek 8:12; 9:9).

Thus, it is assumed that the book of Ezekiel involves the theological perspective and the literary structure of the Sumerian literature. With respect to the assignment of responsibility, the Sumerian literature depicts the abandonment of their deities because of sinful acts of kings. In particular, Eršahuga in the first millennium focuses on the sin of kings rather than sinful acts of inhabitants. In the next chapter, I will explore Akkadian texts such as the Epic of Tukulti-Ninurta I and the inscription of Esarhaddon because those texts deal with the divine abandonment motif to legitimize Assyrian kingship against Babylonians.

⁴⁰⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality in Prophetic and Apocalyptic Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 129–30.

⁴⁰⁵ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 51.

CHAPTER FOUR: AKKADIAN LITERATURE AND THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

4.1. Introduction

Scholars have long explored the divine abandonment motif in Akkadian literature in order to understand YHWH's mobility in the book of Ezekiel.⁴⁰⁶ They have found that in Akkadian literature, Marduk, as Babylonia's main deity, abandons his own city because of the sins of the Babylonians. This theological perspective alludes to the abandonment of YHWH, because of the sins of the Judeans in Ezek 8–11. Daniel I. Block notes:

Ezekiel's audience had been infected by many of the prevailing religious ideas among Israel's neighbors. It is appropriate, therefore, that the account of the vision of impending destruction of their own beloved city should be cast in terms and employ motifs with which they had become fascinated. Even without Israel's own longstanding traditions of YHWH's association with Zion, his portrayal of YHWH leaving Jerusalem would have had a familiar ring.⁴⁰⁷

The comparative studies have shed light on the theory that the exiles were Ezekiel's audience in Babylon. Nevertheless, they have failed to further explain how the abandonment of Marduk involves conflicts between the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Furthermore, although some have also found that the literary structure of the book of Ezekiel reflects that of Esarhaddon's inscription, it has not yet been explained why the book of Ezekiel

⁴⁰⁶ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 1974, 9–41; McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 60–66; Miller and Roberts, *The Hand of the Lord*, 1–26; Bodi, *Erra*, 183–218; Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 136–141; 254–279; Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 101–49; Daniel I. Block, "Divine Abandonment: Ezekiel's Adaptation of An Ancient Near Eastern Motif," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 15–42; Margaret S. Odell, "Genre and Persona in Ezekiel 24:15–24," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 195–219; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 109–13; Niehaus, *Ancient near Eastern Themes*, 116–37; Block, *By the River Chebar*, 73–99.

⁴⁰⁷ Block, *By the River Chebar*, 99.

uses Assyrian traditions, such as Tukulti-Ninurta Epic,⁴⁰⁸ Marduk's Ordeal,⁴⁰⁹ and Esarhaddon's autobiographical apology.⁴¹⁰ In all of these cases, Assyrians devastated Babylon and transferred the statue of Marduk to Assur. The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic describes a variety of Babylonian deities who left their city, Babylon, due to the guilt of the Babylonian king Kashtiliash IV (1232–1225 BCE). The Marduk's Ordeal, written between 689 and 612 BCE,⁴¹¹ describes Assyrian scribes who also depicted the transfer of the statue of Marduk as a prisoner. Likewise, in Esarhaddon's autobiographical apology, Marduk voluntarily left his city Babylon because of the sins of Babylonians. How do we understand this Assyrian theological perspective? In my view, Assyrian scribes actively used the divine abandonment motif which symbolizes the weakness of Marduk for their political propaganda against the Babylonians. In what follows, I argue that Ezekiel intentionally appropriates the divine abandonment motif against the Babylonians in order to highlight YHWH's kingship for the exile community. Interestingly, Ezekiel uses the same motif to highlight the strength of his deity, YHWH. Both Ezekiel and Assyrian scribes introduced the motif as political propaganda to justify their victory against Babylon. Of course, the Babylonians also described Marduk's abandonment of his sanctuary because of their

⁴⁰⁸ Peter Machinist, "Literature as Politics: The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Bible," *CBQ* 38 (1976): 455–82.

⁴⁰⁹ Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 205–53.

⁴¹⁰ Barbara N. Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics: Figurative Aspects of Esarhaddon's Babylonian Policy* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1993). For a discussion of autobiographical apology, see Hayim Tadmor, "Autobiographical Apology in the Royal Assyrian Literature," in *History, Historiography and Interpretation: Studies in Biblical and Cuneiform Languages*, ed. Hayim Tadmor and Moshe Weinfeld (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), 36–57. More recently, Andrew Knapp comprehensively examined royal apologetic in the ancient Near East. See Andrew Knapp, *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015).

⁴¹¹ Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory*, 205–53.

improper care for his statue in the Poem of Erra,⁴¹² whereas Ezekiel describes YHWH's constancy.

The Poem of Erra was written by the Babylonian Kabti-ilani-Marduk from the perspective of the conquered. In the fifth tablet of the poem, the poet depicts how Babylonians suffered from invaders such as Subateans, Assyrians, and Gutians. Those invaders actively used the transfer of the statue of Marduk from Babylon to their city. In the poem, Marduk is not a main character. Marduk is very passive. Rather, the main character of the poem is Erra (or Nergal "whose aspects as a god of plague and lord of the underworld").⁴¹³ After Erra persuaded Marduk to leave his sanctuary, Marduk left Babylon to refurbish his statue. Then, Erra commanded his lieutenant Ishum (god of fire and as leader in battle)⁴¹⁴ with the Sibitti (seven destroyers) to destroy Babylon. After his appeasement by Ishum, Erra also stopped destroying Babylon but commanded Ishum to destroy foreign armies. As Daniel Bodi assumed, Ezekiel as one of the conquered must have known the Poem of Erra.⁴¹⁵ In contrast to the Poem of Erra, Ezekiel would have used it to highlight YHWH's kingship. In the book of Ezekiel, YHWH himself decides his abandonment of Jerusalem and commands six destroyers to destroy inhabitants of the city (Ezekiel 8–11). YHWH's supremacy over Marduk would be another polemic against the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

⁴¹² Luigi Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, SANE 1/3 (Malibu: Undena, 1977); Peter Machinist, "Rest and Violence in the Poem of Erra," *JAOS* 103 (1983): 221–26; Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 282–315; Daniel Bodi, *The Book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1991); Foster, *Before the Muses*, 757–89.

⁴¹³ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 282.

⁴¹⁴ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 283.

⁴¹⁵ Daniel Bodi comprehensively examined similar parallels between the book of Ezekiel and the Poem of Erra. He also studied the divine abandonment motif in Ezek 8–11. See Bodi, *Erra*, 95–116.

To understand why Ezekiel frequently uses Assyrian royal ideology, I will first examine how the Neo-Assyrian Empire influenced the Judean society in the late 8th century and 7th century BCE. Scholars such as Morton Cogan, John McKay, Angelika Berlejung, Ariel M. Bagg and William S. Morrow have argued that the Neo-Assyrian Empire did not impose its religious cults on its vassals.⁴¹⁶ Nevertheless, vassal kings voluntarily introduced Assyrian religions and encouraged the study of Assyrian texts. Since Ezekiel was born in 622 BCE, during King Josiah's religious reform (cf. Ezek 1:1-3), he was accustomed to Assyrian religious traditions, especially Assyrian royal ideology. After the Neo-Babylonia Empire defeated Pharaoh Necho II at Carchemish in 605 BCE, the Neo-Babylonia Empire dominated the southern Levant. But in contrast to the Neo-Assyrian Empire's imperial ideology, as David Vanderhooft points out, the Neo-Babylonian Empire did not continue the Assyrian provincial system outside of Babylonia.⁴¹⁷ This indicates that Ezekiel must have been influenced by Assyrian royal ideology rather than the Neo-Babylonian ideology. It is difficult to know how Ezekiel learned the imperial ideology only during the Babylonian Exile. He must have gradually learned Assyrian religious practices and its royal ideology, even as King Josiah worked to eliminate them from his nation. For this reason, Ezekiel's strong aniconism reflects his rejection of Assyrian religious practices.

Having analyzed the influence of two empires on the book of Ezekiel, I will investigate how Assyrians depict the divine abandonment motif in their traditions against Babylonians. As

⁴¹⁶ McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 28–44; Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 1974, 111–15; Angelika Berlejung, “The Assyrians in the West: Assyrianization, Colonialism, Indifference, or Development Policy?,” in *Congress Volume: Helsinki, 2010*, ed. Martti Nissinen, VTSup 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 21–60; Ariel M. Bagg, “Palestine under Assyrian Rule: A New Look at the Assyrian Imperial Policy in the West,” *JAOS* 133 (2013): 119–44; William S. Morrow, “Were There Neo-Assyrian Influences in Manasseh's Temple?: Comparative Evidence from Tel-Miqne/Ekron,” *CBQ* 75 (2013): 53–73.

⁴¹⁷ David S. Vanderhooft, *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets*, Harvard Semitic Museum Monographs 59 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 110–12; Vanderhooft, “Babylonian Strategies of Imperial Control in the West: Royal Practice and Rhetoric,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 235–62.

we discussed in the previous chapter, the divine abandonment motif is already popular in Sumerian literature in which Sumerian scribes intentionally used it to legitimize their current kingship. It is significant that, as Peter Machinist points out, Assyrian scribes adapted the motif in Sumerian literature to vindicate their victory against their enemies, especially the Neo-Babylonia Empire, as a *Kulturkampf*.⁴¹⁸ When Assyrian kings transferred the statue of Marduk to their city of Assur, they explained that Marduk voluntarily left his own city because of the sins of the Babylonians. Through this theological perspective, Assyrian kings attempted to make Assur the center of the new Babylon,⁴¹⁹ further traumatizing the oppressed Babylonians. For this reason, when the statue of Marduk was returned to Babylon in the akitu festival by Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104 BCE), Babylonians praised Marduk’s sovereignty over other gods through their recitation of the Babylonian creation story, *Enuma Elish*.⁴²⁰

When the Assyrian king Sennacherib destroyed Babylon and transferred the statue of Marduk to his city, Assur in 689 BCE, Babylonians experienced the repeated event. Out of this new crisis, *Marduk’s Ordeal* was composed. It is a counter-text which depicts Marduk’s abandonment and his imprisonment.⁴²¹ It was written to reflect “the chaos that ruled the Babylonian political scene.”⁴²² Eckart Frahm correctly recognizes that under the Assyrian king Sennacherib, Assur replaced Marduk in the new Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* as Assyrian

⁴¹⁸ Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 464.

⁴¹⁹ Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 471.

⁴²⁰ John P. Nielsen, “Marduk’s Return: Assyrian Imperial Propaganda, Babylonian Cultural Memory, and the Akītu Festival of 667 BC,” in *Memory and Urban Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Martin Bommas, Juliette Harrison, and Phoebe Roy (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 3–32.

⁴²¹ Eckart Frahm, “Counter-Texts, Commentaries, and Adaptations: Politically Motivated Responses to the Babylonian Epic of Creation in Mesopotamia, the Biblical World and Elsewhere,” *Orient* 45 (2010): 3–34.

⁴²² Frahm, “Counter-Texts,” 6.

propaganda text against the Babylonian myth.⁴²³ Similarly, when Babylonians carried away Jehoiachin and the leaders including Ezekiel to Babylon in 597 BCE (Ezek 1:1–3; cf. 2 Kings 24:12), Ezekiel’s exile community might plan to write a counter-text against the Neo-Babylonia Empire.

4.2. The Assyrian Empire’s Religious Influence on the Book of Ezekiel

Scholars have long disputed whether the Neo-Assyrians imposed their religion on their vassals.⁴²⁴ Since extra biblical sources for the Assyrian religious imposition on vassals are scant, neither scholarly arguments seem conclusive. On the one hand, to explain the success of King Josiah’s religious reformation (622 BCE), scholars have argued that King Josiah purged his grandfather King Manasseh’s Assyrian cults, which were previously imposed by the Assyrian Empire. On the other hand, Morton Cogan argues that Assyrians required their provinces to worship their main god Assur but did not require such worship for their vassals.⁴²⁵ In a similar vein, as John McKay reexamines King Manasseh’s revels in 2 Chronicles, he insists that King Manasseh’s worship of the Queen of Heaven reflects his indigenous worship more than Assyrian cults.⁴²⁶ More recently, based upon new archaeological discoveries, scholars such as Angelika Berlejung, Ariel M. Bagg, and William S. Morrow are attempting to prove Cogan and McKay’s

⁴²³ Frahm, “Counter-Texts,” 8–13.

⁴²⁴ McKay, *Religion in Judah*; Mordechai Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1974); Hermann Spieckermann, *Juda Unter Assur in Der Sargonidenzeit*, FRLANT 129 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982); Peter Machinist, “Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah,” *JAOS* 103 (1983): 719–37.

⁴²⁵ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 111–15.

⁴²⁶ McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 1–4.

arguments.⁴²⁷ However, although their studies shed light on Assyria's tolerant religious policy, their opinions overlook that Assyrian vassals voluntarily introduced Assyrian cults in order to maintain their social-economic status under imperial hegemony in the seventh century BCE. In this section, as I introduce a brief overview of Assyrian religious policy, I will argue that Assyrian vassals, particularly Judean kings, brought Assyrian cults into the city of Jerusalem. Regardless of Assyria's tolerant religious policy, since King Ahaz first brought an altar in the eighth century BCE, a variety of idolatrous statues had been increasing in Jerusalem. In contrast to the Assyrian religious perspective that statues of gods represent their deity, Ezekiel expresses his strong aniconism, thereby portraying the divine presence with multiple similes.

Hermann Spieckermann has argued that the Neo-Assyrian Empire imposed its religious obligations on its vassals.⁴²⁸ In the chapter, "Religious and Political Measures of the Assyrians against Judah and Other Conquered Peoples," Spieckermann reexamined Assyrian military and administrative documents during Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II and found that when Assyrian kings ruled their conquered people, there are no clear distinction between vassals and provincial states.⁴²⁹ Thus, Spieckermann insists that regular offerings for Assur were imposed by Assyrian

⁴²⁷ Steven W. Holloway, *Aššur Is King! Aššur Is King!: Religion in the Exercise of Power in the Neo-Assyrian Empire Culture and History of the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Simo Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion in the 8th and 7th Centuries and Its Long-Term Repercussions in the West," in *Symbiosis, Symbolism and Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*, ed. William G. Dever and Seymour Gitin (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 99–112; Angelika Berlejung, "The Assyrians in the West: Assyrianization, Colonialism, Indifference, or Development Policy?," in *Congress Volume: Helsinki, 2010*, ed. Martti Nissinen, VTSup 148 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 21–60; Ariel M. Bagg, "Palestine under Assyrian Rule: A New Look at the Assyrian Imperial Policy in the West," *JAOS* 133 (2013): 119–44; William S. Morrow, "Were There Neo-Assyrian Influences in Manasseh's Temple?: Comparative Evidence from Tel-Miqne/Ekron," *CBQ* 75 (2013): 53–73.

⁴²⁸ Spieckermann, *Juda Unter Assur*, 200–225.

⁴²⁹ Spieckermann, *Juda Unter Assur*, 316.

kings.⁴³⁰ To support his argument, Spieckermann provides examples of Assyrian religious imposition on vassals: the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon (VTE), Esarhaddon's Egyptian campaign, and Ashurbanipal's punishment of the rebellious Aramaeans of the Sealand. Having identified Baal, Asherah, and the Host of Heaven with Assyrian deities, Spieckermann concluded that Assyrian religious impositions on vassals triggered Josiah's resistance against the Neo-Assyrian Empire.⁴³¹ Following Spieckermann's argument, Simo Parpola also emphasized the influence of Assyrian religion and royal ideology. For Parpola, at the outset, Assyria, which had belonged to a province of the Ur III dynasty, was a local ruler but was transformed into "the earthly representative of the supreme god" during the 8th and 7th century.⁴³² Parpola explains that the essential tools of Neo-Assyrian imperialism are "treaties, diplomacy, ruthless deployment of military force, political intimidation, indoctrination, and propaganda."⁴³³ Tiglath-pileser III actively introduced these tools in 745 BCE, while "he systematically reduced semi-independent vassal countries to Assyrian provinces."⁴³⁴ Parpola especially focused on "elites as a channel of Assyrian cultural influence." The Neo-Assyrian Empire thoroughly educated exiled princes and aristocratic youths at the court, "since pro-Assyrian foreign elites were the best possible medium to advance Assyrian interests in a country waiting to be annexed or already annexed."⁴³⁵ Like Spieckermann, as Parpola compares VTE with Deuteronomy, he argues that "the Deuteronomic concept of God, which according to current scholarly consensus evolved in the late 7th or early

⁴³⁰ Spieckermann, *Juda Unter Assur*, 322–44.

⁴³¹ Spieckermann, *Juda Unter Assur*, 373–81.

⁴³² Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion," 100.

⁴³³ Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion," 100.

⁴³⁴ Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion," 100.

⁴³⁵ Parpola, "Assyria's Expansion," 101.

6th century BCE and is basic to all later Judaism, is heavily indebted to Assyrian religion and royal ideology.”⁴³⁶

By contrast, many others Assyriologists argue that the Neo-Assyrian Empire required their provinces to worship their main god Assur but its religious imposition on their vassals is not certain. While A. T. Olmstead asserts that Assyrian imperial religious policy influenced its vassals, Morton Cogan argues that “there is no evidence to suggest that Assyria subjected native cults to regulation, except the Arab statues which proclaim the might of Assur.”⁴³⁷ He further insists that *kakki Assur*, “the weapon of Assur” in the provincial center, is planted in territories formerly annexed provinces rather than in the vassal states.⁴³⁸ Thus he concludes that “vassal states bore no religious obligations whatsoever.”⁴³⁹ His argument influences later scholars who have attempted to examine Assyrian religious imposition on vassals. However, Cogan does not explain why King Manasseh voluntarily brought Assyrian cults, although he admits the possibility of King Manasseh’s adoption. Likewise, John McKay also insists that “the various deities worshiped in Judah during the period of Assyrian domination lack the definitive aspects of Assyrian deities and generally exhibit the characteristics of popular Palestinian paganism.”⁴⁴⁰ Thus, he argues that King Manasseh’s establishment of the Queen of Heaven reflects his indigenous worship rather than “Assyrianization.”⁴⁴¹ Nevertheless, his studies relied heavily on

⁴³⁶ Parpola, “Assyria’s Expansion,” 105.

⁴³⁷ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 112.

⁴³⁸ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 53–55.

⁴³⁹ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 112.

⁴⁴⁰ McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 20.

⁴⁴¹ McKay, *Religion in Judah*, 26–27.

the historicity of 2 Chronicles, thereby insisting King Manasseh's infidelity toward the Assyrian Empire.

Based upon Cogan and McKay's arguments, scholars have examined extra-biblical texts and archaeological sites. By examining Ashurbanipal's letters, Angelika Berlejung argues that the Assyrian Vassal Treaty highlights military assistance and obligation, not assimilation.⁴⁴² She further insists that the Assyrian royal stele in Gaza was set up in public places, not in temples.⁴⁴³ Moreover, Berlejung points out that retention of the worship of the sun and moon in the Aramaean religion shows independence from the Assyrian traditions.⁴⁴⁴ According to her main thesis, Berlejung argues that since Assyrian political policy is to intensify their economic profits from their vassals, Assyrians do not necessarily require their vassals to worship their god.⁴⁴⁵ In a similar vein, Ariel M. Bagg argues that "the imposition of Assyrian religion and the prohibition of local cults are absolutely foreign to Assyrian expansion policy."⁴⁴⁶ Thus, he insists that no Assyrianization took place in Palestine, since Assyrians maximized their economic profits with minimum infrastructural investments.⁴⁴⁷ Likewise, as William S. Morrow examines the temple complex of Akayus, a king of Ekron and a contemporary of King Manasseh, he argues that "no demonstrable influences of Assyria religious practices appear."⁴⁴⁸ Morrow insists that since

⁴⁴² Berlejung, "The Assyrians in the West," 21–60

⁴⁴³ Berlejung, "The Assyrians in the West," 49.

⁴⁴⁴ Berlejung, "The Assyrians in the West," 38.

⁴⁴⁵ Berlejung, "The Assyrians in the West," 46.

⁴⁴⁶ Bagg, "Palestine under Assyrian Rule," 125.

⁴⁴⁷ Bagg, "Palestine under Assyrian Rule," 127, 131.

⁴⁴⁸ Morrow, "Neo-Assyrian Influences," 53–54.

Ekron's political position has affinities with Judah's, non-influences of Assyrian religious imposition in the temple of Akyus prove Assyria's tolerant religious policy for Judah.⁴⁴⁹

Although their arguments are cogent based upon their archaeological evidence, they failed to explain that Assyrian vassals voluntarily brought Assyrian cults to maintain their socio-economic status under imperial hegemony in the seventh century BCE. Presumably, by introducing Assyrian cults in their city, the upper classes of vassals wanted to maintain their status quo. Although Steven W. Holloway agrees with Cogan's thesis, he notices the Assyrian religious imposition on the rebellious Aramaeans of the Sealands in the Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, Holloway explains that Assyrian royal inscriptions, palace reliefs, and royal steles functioned as visual violence to vassals and even to the public with low literacy levels, regardless of vassals.⁴⁵¹ Vassal kings who experienced Assyrian royal ideology in such tools must have felt threatened.⁴⁵² In a similar vein, as Daniel Smith-Christopher analyzes whether the Assyrians imposed their religion on conquered people, he emphasizes the role of Assyrian garrisons in the vassals.⁴⁵³ He argues that "there were religious associations, with the collection of heavy tributes, in garrisons."⁴⁵⁴ In other words, although Assyrian religious cults were not set up in the temple, their appearance must have brought psychological oppressions to

⁴⁴⁹ Morrow, "Neo-Assyrian Influences," 21.

⁴⁵⁰ Holloway, *Aššur Is King!*, 61.

⁴⁵¹ Holloway, *Aššur Is King!*, 193.

⁴⁵² Irene J. Winter how Assyrians used historical narratives in the representational art associated with royal palaces. He argues that since pictures do not require previous knowledge or decoding skill, Assyrian royal rhetoric in reliefs was very effective tool to deal with its audiences. See Irene J. Winter, "Royal Rhetoric and the Development of Historical Narrative in Neo-Assyrian Reliefs," *Studies in Visual Communication* 7 (1981): 2–38.

⁴⁵³ Daniel L. Smith, *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Bloomington: Meyer-Stone, 1989), 26–29.

⁴⁵⁴ Smith, *Religion of the Landless* 27.

vassals. Thus, to receive favors from Assyrian kings, vassals voluntarily brought Assyrian cults into their cities. For example, King Ahaz introduced an altar for Tiglath Pileser III. King Manasseh established a wide range of forms of idolatrous worship, especially the worship of the Queen of Heaven for the Assyrian King Sennacherib (704–681 BCE).

Regardless of Assyrian tolerant religious policy, such voluntary worship entailed an enormous increase of engraved statues. As J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes examined a number of idolatrous forms of worship in the period of King Manasseh, they paid attention to the increasing practice of syncretistic religion,⁴⁵⁵ for example, Assyrian astral worships, child sacrifice, soothsaying and augury, a carved image of Asherah in the temple, and inscriptions at Kuntillet Ajurd and at Khirbet el-Qom referring to “Yahweh and his Asherah.”⁴⁵⁶ Although King Manasseh maintained his kingdom under the Assyrian Empire for fifty years, his excessive loyalty did not bring positive benefits to Judah. Based upon archaeological works of Avraham Faust and Israel Finkelstein, Brad Kelle insists that King Manasseh paid heavy tributes to Assyria and even lost the Shephelah to Philistine.⁴⁵⁷

After the death of King Ashurbanipal in 627 BCE, in the political turmoil between the demise of the Assyrian Empire and the rise of the Babylonian Empire, King Josiah could successfully purge idolatrous Assyrian cults as well as indigenous worships. Brad Kelle argues that “Assyria’s increasing struggles with Babylonia certainly would have drawn Assyrian

⁴⁵⁵ J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 435–36.

⁴⁵⁶ Miller and Hayes, *History of Ancient Israel*, 435.

⁴⁵⁷ Brad E. Kelle, “Judah in the Seventh Century: From the Aftermath of Sennacherib’s Invasion to the Beginning of Jehoiakim’s Rebellion,” in *Ancient Israel’s History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources*, ed. Bill T. Arnold and Richard S. Hess (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 356.

attention away from the western vassals' kingdoms."⁴⁵⁸ Indeed, under the political circumstance, King Josiah could proceed with his religious reformatations without any obstacles (2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35). Although King Josiah was killed by the Egyptian King Neco II, who tried to support the Assyrian Empire in Haran in 609 BCE, his religious reforms and political achievement are significant. For example, King Josiah's religious reformation reached the northern area to abolish idolatrous worships in the Assyrian province.

Since Ezekiel is accustomed to King Josiah's religious reformation, he portrays his indignation against idols. Marvin Sweeney argues that Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest would have been born in 622 BCE, the year that King Josiah's religious reforms and purging began.⁴⁵⁹ He further insists that "as a prospective priest in the Jerusalem Temple, Ezekiel would have been reared and educated in the context of Josiah's program of religious reform and national restoration, which envisioned a unified Israel that looked to a restored Jerusalem Temple as its holy center."⁴⁶⁰ For example, Ezekiel's visionary journey (Ezekiel 8–11) emphasizes the purging of all abominations in the temple of Jerusalem.

Traditionally, a variety of statues of gods represent ancient Near Eastern deities. This perspective was enhanced during the period of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. With respect to the Neo-Assyrian Empire's spoliation of divine images, Morton Cogan notes as follows:

Assyria was assuredly not alone among the ancient conquerors in despoiling divine images; but the repeated mention of Assyrian spoliation in the sources permits study of its practice in particular... We have a palace relief, dating from the reign of Tiglath-

⁴⁵⁸ Kelle, "Judah," 376.

⁴⁵⁹ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 26.

⁴⁶⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 12.

pileser III, depicting the spoliation of an unknown town. Assyrian soldiers are shown carrying the statues of various deities, all of whom are resplendently seated upon their thrones. This stately and respectful portrayal of the gods' procession to Assyria seems to suggest that Assyria sustained in practice the literary motif of the gods voluntarily abandoning their faithful and flocking to Assyria to praise Ashur.⁴⁶¹

As Cogan notes, Assyria actively used the spoliation of divine images. By deporting statues from the conquered nation, the Neo-Assyrian Empire explained the reason of their fall as divine abandonment and further required heavy tributes from them. Steven W. Holloway notes the divine abandonment motif as Assyrians' psychological strategy:

Historically, the deportation of divine images more often than not was a well-advertised component in the punitive deportation of insubmissive rulers, ruling families, and populations groups... When the Assyrians infrequently chose to describe the "actions" of deported gods in relation to their removal from their patron nations and temples, the discourse was usually couched in terms of the ancient pan-Near Eastern reward theology of "divine abandonment": the sins of the conquered nation impelled the offended gods to reject their own people.⁴⁶²

The Babylonians suffered both the loss of the statue of Marduk and physical destruction by the Assyrians. For example, the Poem of Erra and Marduk's Ordeal reflect the chaos of Babylon after they lost the statue of Marduk to foreigners. When we consider Assyrian and Babylonian religious perspectives, they strongly rely on statues of their patron deities. Thus, the rhetoric of divine abandonment by Assyrians left traumatic scars on Babylonians.

⁴⁶¹ Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, 22–3.

⁴⁶² Holloway, *Aššur Is King!*, 150.

On the contrary, Ezekiel uses multiple similes and metaphors for YHWH instead of describing the divine presence with tangible idolatrous forms. As John F. Kutsko analyzes Ezekiel's polemic against idolatry, he asserts:

We can also speculate why Ezekiel earnestly mocks idolatry and how his polemic directly engages the paradox involving the presence and absence of God. Ezekiel offers the exiles a proposition: the physical presence of idols indicates their powerlessness. In so doing, Ezekiel provides one element to the argument that the absence of Yahweh's presence indicates God's power. Through this argument, Ezekiel frees the exiles from the conclusion that absence means divine abandonment or defeat. Ironically, then, the judgment against idolatry, which is central to Ezekiel's reason for exile, provides the conceptual means for social-spiritual survival and for hope of return.⁴⁶³

Kutsko further argues that Ezekiel never directly uses Priestly terminology or the anthropomorphic phrase *צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים* "the image of God" in the book of Genesis (Gen 1:27 and 9:6), but knows the abandonment motif as a counter claim against Mesopotamian royal ideology.⁴⁶⁴ For Kutsko, Ezekiel radically refrains from using the Hebrew noun *צֶלֶם* "image" which is often associated with the Mesopotamian ideology of cult statues as "*the šalam ili/ilāni*."⁴⁶⁵ Thus, Kutsko insists that since *צֶלֶם* "image" is also used in the context of cult statues, Ezekiel describes the vision of God as *דְּמוּת כְּמֵרֶאֱזָה אָדָם* "likeness, like the appearance of man" rather than the Priestly *צֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים*.⁴⁶⁶ More recently, Jill Middlemas examined the polemics against idol passages in the prophets and a wide variety of rhetorical strategies related to divine

⁴⁶³ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 42.

⁴⁶⁴ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 62; Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology and Its Ethical Implications," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong, SBLSymS 9 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 125.

⁴⁶⁵ Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology," 132.

⁴⁶⁶ Kutsko, "Ezekiel's Anthropology," 133.

absence and divine presence.⁴⁶⁷ As Middlemas takes into consideration Ezekiel’s aniconism, she argues that by using similes and metaphors, “Ezekiel obfuscate any one figuration of the deity.”⁴⁶⁸ According to Middlemas’s analysis, “YHWH is likened to a human being (אָדָם), a type of mixed form with an upper half of amber and a lower half of fire (1:27; 8:2), a rainbow (1:28), and fire (שָׁרָף).”⁴⁶⁹ In particular, when Ezekiel depicts YHWH’s appearance, he often uses the Hebrew nouns “like likeness or appearance” (כְּמִרְאָה) and “likeness” (דְּמוּת). Presumably, due to Assyrian religious influence, the Israelites place too much reliance on their idols which symbolize YHWH’s presence. Thus, by introducing similes and metaphors regarding YHWH, Ezekiel criticizes forms of idolatrous worship.

4.3. The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic vs. the Enuma Elish

To understand the divine abandonment motif in the book of Ezekiel, it is necessary to discuss Assyrian texts which depict the motif because the conquered have sinned against their patron deity. In the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, it is observed that Assyrians use the divine abandonment motif to justify their victory against Babylonians. In his article “Literature as Politics,” Peter Machinist argued that Assyrian elites introduced the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic in Akkadian as political propaganda to justify the sack of Babylon in 1215 BCE by Tukulti-Ninurta

⁴⁶⁷ Jill Middlemas, “Divine Presence in Absence: Aniconism and Multiple Imaging in the Prophets,” in *Divine Presence and Absence in Exilic and Post-Exilic Judaism*, ed. Nathan MacDonald and Izaak J. Hulster (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 183–211.

⁴⁶⁸ Middlemas, “Divine Presence in Absence,” 202.

⁴⁶⁹ Middlemas, “Divine Presence in Absence,” 201.

I (1233–1197 BCE).⁴⁷⁰ Of particular importance is his argument that Assyrian scribes intentionally adapted a royal prayer in the Emesal dialect with an Akkadian translation and introduced “Assyrian Enlil” in the Epic to make Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta as a royal cult center.⁴⁷¹ As we discussed in chapter 3, the Emesal prayer appeared as a ritual lament after the Sumerian city laments ceased to be recopied by scribes. The main difference between the Sumerian city laments and the Emesal prayer is the assignment of responsibility. In particular, Eršahuga, one of the Emesal prayers, explicitly depicts the divine abandonment because of the sin of a king. Similarly, the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic also assigns the responsibility to the guilt of the Babylonian king Kashtiliash IV (1232–1225 BCE). In this section, I argue that like the Sumerian city laments, Assyrian scribes introduced the divine abandonment motif as political propaganda to legitimize their king. I will discuss Machinist’s two features of political propaganda, which lie behind the composition of the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic. The first was to receive support from Assyrian elites who opposed Tukulti-Ninurta I’s policy, and the second was to make Assyria “the new center of Mesopotamian culture, with Assur the new Babylon.”⁴⁷² I will also analyze how Babylonians composed the Enuma Elish against the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic in order to highlight Marduk’s kingship.

In presenting his first feature, support from Assyrian elites, Machinist argues that “the audience of the Epic must be the Assyrians, particularly the royal court and priestly hierarchy based in the capital city of Assur.”⁴⁷³ According to Machinist, some Assyrian elites worried that

⁴⁷⁰ Peter Machinist, “Literature as Politics: The Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Bible,” *CBQ* 38 (1976): 455–82. For translation, see Foster, *Before the Muses*, 211–30.

⁴⁷¹ Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 472–73.

⁴⁷² Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 471.

⁴⁷³ Machinist, “Literature as Politics” 475.

the onslaught of Tukulti-Ninurta I could bring resistance by the southern Babylonians.⁴⁷⁴ Moreover, they opposed the growing power of the deification of their king through the influx of Babylonian culture into their city Assur, since Babylonians deified their kings.⁴⁷⁵ Perhaps, Tukulti-Ninurta wanted to consolidate different elite groups to fight against Babylonians and Hittites. Hannes D. Galter argues that “the traditional good relations between Babylonians and Hittites worried the Assyrian king and led to his unprovoked invasion into Babylonia.”⁴⁷⁶ In order to persuade Assyrian elites and justify his attack against Babylon, Tukulti-Ninurta I needed proper explanations. First, he proposed that the Babylonian king Kashtiliash IV violated the treaty between the Assyrian king Adad-nirari I (1307–1275 BCE) and the Babylonian king Nazimaruttash (1316–1291 BCE).⁴⁷⁷ In the Epic, although Tukulti-Ninurta I sent his messengers to Kashtiliash IV several times to persuade him to observe the treaty, Kashtiliash IV disobeyed (ii: 15'–20'):

When our fathers made a pact before your divinity,
 They swore an oath between them and invoked your greatness...
 Why has the king of the Kassites from of old invalidated your plan and your ordinance?
 He had no fear of your oath, he transgressed your command,
 he schemed an act of malice.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 475–76.

⁴⁷⁵ Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 467.

⁴⁷⁶ Hannes D. Galter, “Looking Down the Tigris: The Interrelations Between Assyria and Babylonia,” in *The Babylonian World*, ed. Gwendolyn Leick (New York: Routledge, 2007), 530.

⁴⁷⁷ Galter, “Looking Down the Tigris,” 530.

⁴⁷⁸ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 217.

Second, Tukulti-Ninurta I proposed that all patron deities endorsed the attack of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Not only does Assyrian main deity Assur support Tukulti-Ninurta I, but other patron deities actively assist him (i: 31'–34'):

The gods became angry at the king of the Kassite's betrayal of the emblem of Shamash,

Against the transgressor of an oath, Kashtiliash,

The gods of heaven and netherworld.

They were angry at the king, the land, and the people.⁴⁷⁹

Thus, such political and religious explanations must have vindicated Tukulti-Ninurta I's attack against Babylonia.

In arguing the second feature, making Assyria the new center of Mesopotamian culture, Machinist explains the strategy of Tukulti-Ninurta I as *Kulturkampf*.⁴⁸⁰ For Assyrians, as Galter points out, "southern Mesopotamia was regarded as the birthplace of civilization, the land where the gods themselves roamed during the times before the Great Flood."⁴⁸¹ As we discussed in chapter three, Babylonians had preserved their religious traditions such as the Curse of Agade, the Cuthean Legend, and the Sumerian city laments, and taught their traditions in their school curriculum. Especially, they respected Enlil who is the main deity in those traditions. Tukulti-Ninurta I not only wanted to be a king over Assyria and Babylonia, but also to make his city as the center of Mesopotamian culture. Machinist proposes that the strategy of Tukulti-Ninurta I is

⁴⁷⁹ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 213.

⁴⁸⁰ Machinist, "Literature as Politics," 470–74.

⁴⁸¹ Galter, "Looking Down the Tigris," 535.

Kulturkampf.⁴⁸² That is why the Epic intentionally introduced the epithet of Assur as “Assyrian Enlil” (i: 2’–5’). A psalm for Tukulti-Ninurta I in dialectal Sumerian and in Akkadian also praises Assur as “Assyrian Enlil” (34’–39’):

O Lord, do not neglect any favor for your land Assyria!

O Assur, great lord, king of the Anunna-gods, the land of Assyria is yours!

O Assyrian Enlil, lord of the world, the land of Assyria is yours!⁴⁸³

The new divine epithet of Assur as “Assyrian Enlil” denotes the supremacy of Assyrian main deity Assur. In the Epic, Enlil even became Tukulti-Ninurta’s father (i: 19’–22’):

Enlil exalted him as if he (Enlil) were his (Tukulti-Ninurta’s)

own father, right after his firstborn son!

Precious is he in (Enlil’s) family, for where there is competition,

he has of him protection.

No one of all kings was ever rival to him,

No sovereign stood forth as his battlefield opponent.⁴⁸⁴

Since Tukulti-Ninurta I is supported by his father Enlil, he would have insisted his kingship over Babylon. Furthermore, Assyrian scribes appropriate the divine abandonment motif in the Sumerian city laments and the Emesal prayer. By describing the transfer of Babylonia patron deities to Assyrian city Assur, the Epic accentuates the legitimacy of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Of

⁴⁸² Machinist, “Literature as Politics,” 470–74.

⁴⁸³ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 233.

⁴⁸⁴ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 215.

particular importance is its explanation that the Babylonian main deity Marduk left his city Babylon because of the sin of Kashtiliash IV (i: 35'–39'; iii: 21'–22'):

They [were furious and with] the willful one, their shepherd.

His lordship, the lord of the world,

became disturbed, so he [forsook] Nippur,

He would not approach [] (his) seat at Dur-Kurigalzu.

Marduk abandoned his sublime sanctuary, the city [Babylon],

He cursed his favorite city.⁴⁸⁵

.....

Tukulti-Ninurta, having put his trust in his observance of the oath,

was planning for battle,

While Kashtiliash, insofar as he had trespassed the command of

the gods, was altered within himself.⁴⁸⁶

Here, just as the gods abandon their city Akkad and cursed Akkad in the Curse of Agade, Marduk also abandons his city Babylon and even cursed it. But the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic explicitly explains that Babylonian deities left their city because of Kashtiliash IV's disobedience.

As Daniel Bodi points out, the theological perspective of the epic is reflected in Ezekiel's work, where Ezekiel justifies YHWH's wrath against King Zedekiah because "he broke his oaths

⁴⁸⁵ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 213–14.

⁴⁸⁶ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 220.

to the king of Babylon” (Ezek 17:19–20).⁴⁸⁷ Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Ezekiel used the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic to justify the attack of King Nebuchadnezzar II on Jerusalem. In the public script, it seems that Ezekiel, as a pro-Babylonian scribe, describes the reason of the fall of Jerusalem due to King Zedekiah’s disobedience against the *adê* loyalty (the Akkadian term for treaty) of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. But Casey A. Strine argues that Ezekiel uses the well-known treaty as the public transcript to describe the judgment of King Zedekiah but tries to present his hidden transcript as YHWH’s sovereignty over the world, even over Marduk.⁴⁸⁸ As we discussed in chapter three, Ezekiel appropriates Mesopotamian traditions to highlight YHWH’s kingship.

In response to the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Babylonians composed the Babylonian Epic of Creation, so called the Enuma Elish as a counter text. There is no conclusive evidence when the Enuma Elish was composed. W. G. Lambert and Marc Van de Mieroop argue that the return of the statue of Marduk from the Elamites by Nebuchadnezzar I (1126 – 1104 BCE) led to the composition of the Enuma Elish.⁴⁸⁹ However, more recently, Shawn W. Flynn argues that “the final rise of Marduk is not during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in response to Kassite rule, but in response to Assyrian pressures under Tukulti-Ninurta I.”⁴⁹⁰ For Flynn, “Assyrian pressure becomes the motivation for the rise of Marduk’s kingship in the Enuma Elish.”⁴⁹¹ The Enuma Elish depicts how the Babylonian main deity Marduk as warrior and creator rose above Enlil and

⁴⁸⁷ Bodi, *Erra*, 202.

⁴⁸⁸ Strine, *Sworn Enemies*, 241–43.

⁴⁸⁹ Wilfred G. Lambert, “Mesopotamian Creation Stories,” in *Imagining Creation*, ed. Markham Geller and Mineke Schipper (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 17; Van de Mieroop, *History*, 178.

⁴⁹⁰ Shawn W. Flynn, *YHWH Is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 92.

⁴⁹¹ Flynn, *YHWH is King*, 92.

other deities after he killed his grandmother, the sea monster Tiamat.⁴⁹² Thus, Flynn insists that Marduk's absolute kingship over the gods and the world "anticipates or dialogues with the universalistic vision of impending imperialism from the Assyrian Empire."⁴⁹³ In my view, Flynn correctly observes how the Assyrian imperialism influenced Babylonian main deity Marduk. According to Shigeo Yamanda's analysis of Chronicle P, "Tukulti-Ninurta ruled Babylonia directly as king, not just by keeping local Babylonian kings as his vassals" for seven years.⁴⁹⁴ Tukulti-Ninurta I even called himself as "king of Sippar and Babylon."⁴⁹⁵ Due to his direct imperial oppression, Chronicle P described Tukulti-Ninurta as a malefactor against Babylon.⁴⁹⁶ For this reason, Flynn asserts that "the Enuma Elish is responding to the general tone of Assyrian policy, part of which is represented in the Epic Tukulti-Ninurta."⁴⁹⁷

4.4. The Poem of Erra: the Perspective of the Conquered

The Poem of Erra is a very famous text from the first millennium BCE, since "it was diffused in unaltered editions, and with perhaps extraordinary rapidity, in the Mesopotamian cities of Nineveh (the library of Ashurbanipal), Assur, Babylon, Ur, etc. and was known even at

⁴⁹² Lambert, "Mesopotamian Creation Stories," 35–59.

⁴⁹³ Flynn, *YHWH is King*, 96.

⁴⁹⁴ Shigeo Yamanda, "Tukulti-Ninurta I's Rule over Babylonia and its Aftermath," *Orient* 38 (2003), 161.

⁴⁹⁵ Yamanda, "Tukulti-Ninurta I's Rule," 161.

⁴⁹⁶ Yamanda, "Tukulti-Ninurta I's Rule," 163.

⁴⁹⁷ Flynn, *YHWH is King*, 112.

Sultantepe, near ancient Harrān.”⁴⁹⁸ It begins with a long dialogue between Erra (or Nergal “whose aspects as a god of plague and lord of the underworld”)⁴⁹⁹ and his lieutenant Ishum (god of fire and as leader in battle)⁵⁰⁰ with the Sibitti (seven destroyers). Erra who was awoken by Ishum decided to destroy human beings in Babylon because of their noise (Tablet I:84) and their lack of respect for him (Tablet I:120). However, Erra could not wreak havoc until Marduk left his sanctuary. Thus, Erra persuades Marduk to leave Babylon since the statue of Marduk lost its brilliance due to Babylonians’ improper care (Tablet I:127). While Marduk leaves his sanctuary and the statue of Marduk is refurbishing, Erra devastates the city of Babylon and assassinates its inhabitants with the Sibitti (Tablet II and III). In tablet IV, Marduk laments his city Babylon because Sippar and Uruk were destroyed by Sutean nomads who were “Bedouins of the northeast of Mesopotamia”⁵⁰¹ (Tablet IV:54). After Ishum’s speech appeased Erra, Erra ceased to destroy Babylon and commanded Ishum to campaign against the mountain in which the Sutean nomads live (Tablet IV:128-150). In tablet V, Erra returns to his home and commands the recovery of Babylon (Tablet V:20-38). In the last part of tablet V, the poet introduces the name of the author, Kabti-ilani-Marduk of the family Dabibi, and encourages the recitation of the poem (Tablet V:39-61). This summary reflects the difficult times of Babylon inflicted by foreigners. The poet vividly depicts the destruction and devastation of Babylon after Marduk abandoned his sanctuary. It is noteworthy that while the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic was written by the Assyrian scribes for their political purpose, the Poem of Erra seems a kind of ritual confession by

⁴⁹⁸ Cagni, *Poem of Erra*, 5. For a discussion of the Poem of Erra, see Cagni, *Poem of Erra*; Machinist, “Rest and Violence”; Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 282–315; Bodi, *Erra*; Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 757–89.

⁴⁹⁹ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 282.

⁵⁰⁰ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 283.

⁵⁰¹ Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 53.

Babylonians in the desperate period. How can we understand its relationship with the book of Ezekiel? We can find two theological perspectives in the Poem of Erra: both the Poem of Erra and the book of Ezekiel are written by one of the conquered people who experienced traumatic events brought about by foreigners; and both of them attempted to explain the reason of their fall due to their sins.

The first theological perspective in both books is that they were written by one of the conquered people who experienced traumatic events caused by foreigners. However, their perspective toward their inhabitants and their deity is different. In the case of the Poem of Erra, the author is Kabti-ilani-Marduk (which means “Marduk, the most honored of the gods”⁵⁰²) of the family Dabibi (Tablet V:42). As Assyriologists have called attention to the Dabibi family, they have argued that the Poem of Erra is “the work of a Babylonian”⁵⁰³ and “the family is first attested around 765 BCE and associated with high temple office in both Babylon and Uruk.”⁵⁰⁴ However, with respect to the dating and setting of the Poem of Erra, there is no agreement among scholars. Jean Bottéro and Wilfred G. Lambert argue that it is written in the early first millennium because the invasion of Sutean nomads happened in Babylon after the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1124–1103 BCE).⁵⁰⁵ On the other hand, Wolfram von Soden suggests that it is “composed by Kabti-ilani-Marduk between the end of 765 and the beginning of 763”⁵⁰⁶ on the

⁵⁰² Cagni, *The Poem of Erra*, 61.

⁵⁰³ Machinist, “Rest and Violence,” 221.

⁵⁰⁴ Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 284.

⁵⁰⁵ Bodi, *Erra*, 54–56.

⁵⁰⁶ Wolfram von Soden, *The Ancient Orient: An Introduction to the Study of the Ancient Near East*, trans. Donald G. Schley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 219.

basis of the tragic events (probably plague) related to the city of Uruk in the fourth tablet.⁵⁰⁷ As Luigi Cagni and Stephanie Dalley consider the proclamation by Erra “then, afterwards, let the Akkadian arise to slay them all,”⁵⁰⁸ they suggest that it reflects a date in the ninth or eighth century BCE.⁵⁰⁹ In any case, Kabti-ilani-Marduk as a Babylonian describes the most difficult time of Babylon after Marduk abandoned his city:

O warrior Erra, you have put the righteous man to death,
You have put the unrighteous man to death,
He who sinned against you, you put him to death,
He who did not sin against you, you put him to death,
The high priest, assiduous with divine offerings, you put to death,
The functionary who served the king you put to death,
The old men in the anterooms you put to death,
The young girls in their bedrooms you put to death...
I will wreck the temple's sacred chamber, the rampart's battlement,
The pride of the city I will destroy! (Tablet IV: 104–117)⁵¹⁰

Such a portrayal of the destruction of the inhabitants by the seven executioners in Babylon resonates in Ezekiel 9. As Daniel Bodi compares the book of Ezekiel with the Poem of Erra, he

⁵⁰⁷ Cagni, *Poem of Erra*, 21.

⁵⁰⁸ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 785.

⁵⁰⁹ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 21; Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 282.

⁵¹⁰ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 784.

argues that Ezekiel employed the seven destroyers of the Poem of Erra in Ezekiel 9.⁵¹¹ Although Ezek 9:2 portrays “six men with his shattering weapon and among them was a man clothed in linen, with a writing case at his side” in the MT, Bodi observed that the LXX renders “a writing case at his side” as “a girdle of sapphire around his waist” (ζώνη σαπφείρου ἐπὶ τῆς ὀσφύος αὐτοῦ).⁵¹² Bodi argues that Ezekiel appropriates the seven figurines of the Sibitti.⁵¹³ He also emphasized that the portrayal of the destruction of all inhabitants in Jerusalem is exactly similar to the Poem of Erra. Thus, Bodi attempted to find the example of the six destroyers in the ancient Near Eastern traditions. However, we can also find differences between them. Both the MT and the LXX explicitly depicts the last man as one of the six destroyers. Furthermore, according to Ezek 9:6, YHWH commanded the six destroyers to destroy all inhabitants of Jerusalem except those who bear the mark (נ) on their foreheads:

Slay old man, young man and young woman, little children and women for destruction
but do not touch anyone who bears the mark (נ) and from my sanctuary you shall begin.
And they began with elders who were before the House.

While Erra commanded the seven executioners to kill all inhabitants of Babylon in the Poem of Erra, YHWH saved the remnants who bear the mark (נ) on their foreheads.

More importantly, while Marduk’s character is very passive in the Poem of Erra, YHWH Himself decides to abandon Jerusalem and even to destroy it in the book of Ezekiel. In the Poem of Erra, the main character is Erra. Although Erra’s destruction requires Marduk’s abandonment,

⁵¹¹ Bodi, *Erra*, 106–10.

⁵¹² Bodi, *Erra*, 110.

⁵¹³ Bodi, *Erra*, 109–10.

Marduk plays no role in destroying his city. Eventually, Marduk left his city Babylon to refurbish his statue and laments over the destroyed city (Tablet IV: 39–42):

Alas for Babylon, whose crown I fashioned luxuriant as a palm's,
but which the wind has scorched!

Alas for Babylon, that I had laden with seed, like an evergreen,
but of whose delights I could not have what I hoped for!⁵¹⁴

Even though Marduk continuously laments for his city, Erra does not stop destroying Babylon. At last, in the fifth tablet, only Erra's lieutenant Ishum could appease Erra with his speech (Tablet V:16–20):

Ishum made ready to speak, saying to the warrior Erra these words,
Quiet, warrior, hear what I have to say,
No doubt this is true, now, calm down, let us serve you!
At a time you are angry, where is he who can face you?
When Erra heard this, his face beamed,
Like radiant daylight his features glowed.⁵¹⁵

Of particular importance is the praise for Erra and Ishum, not for Marduk in the last section (Tablet V:39–41)

Praise to the great lord Nergal (Erra's different name) and warrior Ishum

⁵¹⁴ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 780.

⁵¹⁵ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 786–87.

for years without number!

How it came to pass that Erra grew angry and set out to lay

waste the lands and destroy their peoples,

But Ishum his counsellor calmed him and left a remnant,⁵¹⁶

Presumably, since Babylonians worried about the destruction of Erra and Ishum, the poet encourages all Babylonians to recite the poem to avoid their anger (Tablet V: 57–61):

The house in which this tablet is placed,

though Erra be angry and the Seven be murderous,

The sword of pestilence shall not approach it, safety abides upon it.

Let this poem stand forever, let it endure till eternity,

Let all lands hear it and praise my valor,

Let all inhabitants witness and extol my name.⁵¹⁷

Regarding the recitation of the poem, Bodi argues that “the tablets of the Poem of Erra were extremely popular among 8th century BCE Babylonians because of their presumed apotropaic quality in warding off evil and destruction.”⁵¹⁸ It is evident that by reciting the Poem of Erra, Babylonians attempted to avoid their destruction rather than the emphasis of the worship for Marduk. By contrast, in the book of Ezekiel YHWH Himself not only decided to abandon His city Jerusalem, but also commanded the six destroyers to cut off all inhabitants of Jerusalem

⁵¹⁶ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 787–88.

⁵¹⁷ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 788.

⁵¹⁸ Bodi, *Erra*, 109.

except those who receive the mark (𐎎) on their foreheads. Furthermore, in the last part (Ezekiel 40–48), YHWH returns to Jerusalem (Ezek 43:3) and makes Jerusalem as the center of the world (Ezekiel 47). Perhaps, when Ezekiel appropriated the divine abandonment motif from the Poem of Erra, he attempted to highlight YHWH's supremacy over Marduk.

The second theological perspective found in both the Poem of Erra and the book of Ezekiel, was that they attempted to explain the reason for their nation's fall, which was due to their sins. While Tukulti-Ninurta Epic presents the abandonment of Babylonian patron deities due to the sin of a king, the Poem of Erra explicitly depicts Marduk's abandonment due to the sins of Babylonian citizens. One of the reasons why Erra decided to destroy human beings is their noise. Because of their noise, the gods cannot sleep (Tablet I: 83). The primary cause of Erra's destruction is their lack of respect for Erra and Marduk (Tablet I:120–123):

So the black-headed folk are contemptuous!
As for me, since they do not fear my name,
And have disregarded Marduk's command,
so he may act according to his wishes,
I will make Marduk angry, stir him from his dwelling,
and lay waste the people!⁵¹⁹

Likewise, as we discussed in chapter three, in Ezek 5:5–17, Ezekiel explains YHWH's judgment against Jerusalem on account of their disobedience of YHWH's laws with greater wickedness than the nations. In particular, Ezek 5:11 focuses on idolatry in the sanctuary. According to

⁵¹⁹ Foster, *Before the Muses*, 763.

Cagni, since the Poem of Erra was created for the cult, it was written on amulets to ward off evils.⁵²⁰ Thus, Ezekiel also knew how popular the Poem of Erra was throughout Mesopotamia. Just as the Poem of Erra highlighted the sins of Babylonians against Erra and Marduk, so the book of Ezekiel also took into consideration the sins of the Israelites against YHWH. However, in the Poem of Erra, Marduk reveals his weakness because of the perspective of the conquered. Marduk seems to be the representative of the Babylonians. Thus, to vindicate their god Marduk, the author relied on Erra and Ishum. By contrast, in the book of Ezekiel, YHWH Himself left his sanctuary because of their sins. YHWH Himself decided to destroy His temple. Although Ezekiel was also one of the conquered, he not only wanted to highlight YHWH's supremacy over Marduk, but also to encourage the exile community.

4.5. Esarhaddon Inscription as Hidden Transcripts

In tracing the divine presence and absence in the book of Ezekiel, scholars have long examined extra biblical texts, especially the inscription of the Assyrian King Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE)⁵²¹ In the inscription (Babylon G), the Babylonian god Marduk voluntarily left his city Babylon because of his fury at the iniquities of his people (i:1'–ii:14').⁵²² It is Marduk's fury that caused the devastation of Babylon. In fact, three of Sennacherib's inscriptions portray that the

⁵²⁰ Cagni explains the role of amulets as follows: “such tablets could be hung on walls by means of a perforated handle through which a fine cord was threaded. This shows that the Mesopotamians took into consideration the promise of V, 57-58...The poem itself evidently came to be considered and used widely as an apotropaic device in exorcisms.” See Cagni, *Poem of Erra*, 14.

⁵²¹ For a discussion of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon, see Erle Leichty, *The Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria (680-669 BC)* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011); Grant Frame, *Babylonia 689-627 B.C.: A Political History* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul, 1992).

⁵²² Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 220.

Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) destroyed Babylon and usurped the statue of Marduk to his capital Assur in 689 BCE: “the Akītu-House stela, the Bavian inscription, and K 1634.”⁵²³ After the death of Sennacherib, his youngest son Esarhaddon not only planned to rebuild the temple of Babylon, Esagila, but also to return Marduk to Babylon. In the inscription of Esarhaddon, his rebuilding project suggests that Marduk changed his mind and decided to return to Babylon. This sequence resembles Ezekiel’s theological structure of the divine presence and absence: the divine presence as the chariot throne vision in Ezekiel 1, the divine absence from the temple of Jerusalem due to its abominations in Ezekiel 8–11, and the divine presence in the new Temple in Ezekiel 40–48. In order to understand this sequence, scholars have referred to Barbara N. Porter’s *Images, Power, and Politics*.⁵²⁴ In her book, Porter examined Esarhaddon’s rebuilding project for pacifying rebels in Babylon. By appropriating the popular motif of divine presence and absence in Mesopotamian traditions, Assyrian scribes not only expected to avoid Esarhaddon’s predecessor Sennacherib’s sin as the destruction of Babylon, but also to establish a new co-kingship for Babylonia and Assyria. Her study helped biblical scholars to understand Ezekiel’s literary structure. Biblical scholars such as John F. Kustko, Daniel I. Block, Margaret S. Odell, and Dale F. Launderville have examined the relationship between the Book of Ezekiel and the inscription of Esarhaddon.⁵²⁵ Although their studies shed lights on the understanding of the theological background of Ezekiel’s literary structure, they overlooked that Ezekiel uses hidden transcripts, the concept which James C. Scott introduced, to resist the Babylonian

⁵²³ Frame, *Babylonia*, 53.

⁵²⁴ Barbara N. Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics: Figurative Aspects of Esarhaddon’s Babylonian Policy* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1993).

⁵²⁵ Kustko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 108–49; Block, “Divine Abandonment,” 15–42; Margaret S. Odell, “Genre and Persona in Ezekiel 24:15–24,” in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Margaret S. Odell and John T. Strong (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 144–219; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 180–83.

Empire. In this section, I will first explore why the Assyrian kings attempted to possess Babylon. Then, I will examine how Sennacherib's destruction of Babylon (689 BCE) had a significant negative impact on the Babylonians. Thus, as I analyze scholars' arguments, I will argue that Ezekiel as "resistance literature" appropriates the popular motif of Marduk's absence and his return in the inscription of Esarhaddon to resist the Babylonian Empire, insofar as the well-known story of Marduk's return reminded Babylonians of their past traumatic events.

The Neo-Assyrian kings always desired to possess Babylon as the capital of southern Mesopotamia, since the acquisition of Babylon not only enabled them to control their enemies such as the Elamites, but also was their duty under the control of their deity Assur. Grant Frame has long examined the relationship between the Assyrians and the Babylonians.⁵²⁶ With regard to the reason why the Assyrian kings attempted to possess Babylon, Frame summarized as follows:

1. Babylonia was a rich country, located on several importance trade routes, and thus a source of wealth for its Assyrian overlords.
2. For Assyria's security, it would be unwise to have an independent and potentially hostile neighbors.
3. It was the practice for Assyrian kings to try to expand the area under their, and the god Aššur's, control.
4. If Babylonia were allowed to gain its freedom, other vassals would view it as a sign of Assyrian weakness and be encouraged to revolt.

⁵²⁶ Frame, *Babylonia*; Frame, "The God Aššur in Babylonia," in *Assyria 1995: Proceedings of the 10th Anniversary Symposium of the Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki, September 7-11, 1995*, ed. Simo Parpola and R. M. Whiting (Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 1997), 55–64; Frame, "My Neighbour's God: Aššur in Babylonia and Marduk in Assyria," *Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 34 (1999): 5–22; Frame, "Babylon: Assyria's Problem and Assyria's Prize," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 3 (2008): 21–31.

5. Any Assyrian king who gave up Babylonia might find his position threatened in Assyria itself by those who thought such an action a sign of weakness.⁵²⁷

For Assyrians, the Babylonians are extremely cumbersome vassal state since they often raised rebels with the support of the Elamites. If Assyrians lost the control of Babylonia, they could lose the buffer zone and face another enemy, in particular the Elamites. Moreover, as Grant Frame points out, if the Assyrian kings lost the control of Babylon, it would be “a sign of weakness,”⁵²⁸ which could set the stage for internal disputes among Assyrian elites. Above all, the deity Assur’s primary mandate was to uphold Babylon’s supremacy.⁵²⁹ Frame argues that “it was the duty of the Assyrian king to expand the area under the control of the Assyrian state god Assur, and thus of his vicar on earth, the king of Assyria.”⁵³⁰ As we discussed in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Tukulti-Ninurta I first accomplished this duty. When Tukulti-Ninurta I transferred the statue of Marduk to Assur, he announced himself as “king of Babylon,” although “no Babylonian king list ever included him among the names of its other rulers.”⁵³¹ But for a long time, his successors simply visited Babylon to bring their offerings to Marduk until Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BCE). After he defeated the Chaldean tribal leader and king of Babylonia, Nabu-mukin-zeri, Tiglath-Pileser III announced himself as king of Babylon in the akitu festival at Babylon in 728, the first Assyrian king to be acknowledged in later Babylonian traditions.⁵³²

⁵²⁷ Frame, *Babylonia*, 250.

⁵²⁸ Frame, *Babylonia*, 250.

⁵²⁹ Frame, “Babylon,” 23.

⁵³⁰ Frame, “Babylon,” 23.

⁵³¹ Frame, “Babylon,” 22.

⁵³² Frame, “Babylon,” 23; Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 28.

Similarly, by using the epithet “king of Babylon,” the Sargonid dynasty (Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, and Ashurbanipal) also directly controlled Babylon.

However, despite the Assyrian kings’ endeavor to control Babylon, they experienced Babylonians’ strong resistance. Especially, Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) tried to directly control Babylon but faced Babylonians’ resistance in alliance with the Elamites. His military solution against Babylon was inevitable. At the outset, although Sennacherib announced himself as “king of Babylon,” he lost his kingship to a native Babylonian, Marduk-zakir-shumi II, “who a few weeks later was himself overthrown by the fiercely anti-Assyrian Marduk-apla-iddina II” (Merodach-Baladan of the Hebrew Bible).⁵³³ As Bustenay Oded has analyzed the mass deportation in the Neo-Assyrian Empire, he has argued that Sennacherib deported 208,000 people from Babylonia to Assyria in his first campaign.⁵³⁴ In an attempt to end the resistance of Babylonians, Sennacherib appointed a puppet king Bel-ibni who was educated in Sennacherib’s palace. But while Sennacherib proceeded with another campaign against Babylon, he replaced Bel-ibni with his elder son Assur-nadin-shumi as king of Babylonia. Six years later, with the support of the Elamites, the Babylonians kidnapped Assur-nadin-shumi and killed him.⁵³⁵ Sennacherib’s revenge against Babylonians was considerable. He smashed statues of the gods in religious facilities and devastated all inhabitants in Babylon in 689 BCE. This catastrophic event left a deep scar in the hearts of Babylonians. In the Bavian inscription (lines 43b–54), Sennacherib describes his attack on Babylon in 689 BCE in detail:

⁵³³ Van de Mieroop, *History*, 253.

⁵³⁴ Bustenay Oded, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1979), 21.

⁵³⁵ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 29.

On my second campaign, I marched quickly to Babylon, which I planned to conquer, and (then) I blew like [the onset] of a storm and enveloped it like a (dense) fog. I besieged the city; then, by means of sapping and ladders, I [captured (it)] (and) plundered [*the city*]. Its people, young and old, I did not spare, and I filled the city squares with their corpses. I carried off alive to my land Šūzubu (Mušēzib-Marduk), the king of Babylon, together with his family (and) his [...]s.

I handed the property of that city — silver, gold, choice stones, possessions (and) property — over to my [people] and they kept it for themselves. My people seized and smashed the gods living inside it, and (then) they took their [possessions] (and) property...

I destroyed, devastated, (and) burned with fire the city, and (its) buildings, from its foundations to its crenellations. I removed the brick(s) and earth, as much as there was, from the (inner) wall and outer wall, the temples, (and) the ziggurat, (and) I threw (it) into the Arahtu river. I dug canals into the center of that city and (thus) leveled their site with water. I destroyed the outline of its foundations and (thereby) made its destruction surpass that of the Deluge. So that in the future, the site of that city and (its) temples will be unrecognizable, I dissolved it (Babylon) in water and annihilated (it), (making it) like a meadow.⁵³⁶

It is noteworthy that Sennacherib tried to elevate Assur, the main deity of Assyria, while he usurped the statue of Marduk in Babylon and demoted his rank in 689 BCE. Regardless of their political policy against Babylon, the Assyrians respected the Babylonians' religious traditions and even maintained the cult of Marduk in Assyria for a long time. Frame argues that "with Tukulti-Ninurta I's conquest of Babylonia at the end of the thirteenth century, Babylonian religious and cultural influence increased in Assyria."⁵³⁷ However, after Sennacherib destroyed

⁵³⁶ Albert K. Grayson and Jamie Novotny, *The Royal Inscriptions of Sennacherib, King of Assyria (704-681 BC). Part 2* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2014), 316–17.

⁵³⁷ Frame, "My neighbour's god," 13.

Babylon in 689 BCE, he intentionally attempted to demote Marduk in Assyria. As Machinist has observed, “the Bavian inscription does not mention the principal Babylonian god, Marduk, and his son Nabu.”⁵³⁸ In contrast to his predecessors, Sennacherib avoids the mention of Marduk in his official documents. In particular, after his attack on Babylon in 689 BCE, Sennacherib not only brought the dust of the destroyed Babylon to the akitu house for Assur-Ansar in the city Assur, but also replaced Marduk with Assur-Ansar in the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish*.⁵³⁹ According to Frame, during the reign of Sargon II, Assyrians identified Assur with Ansar who “belonged to the oldest generation of the gods and was one of Marduk’s ancestors in the Babylonian Epic of Creation.”⁵⁴⁰ Sennacherib followed this equation and renovated the statue of Assur-Ansar in the shrine for the New Year’s festival, the so-called “bit akiti.”⁵⁴¹ Moreover, on the bas-reliefs on the gate of the temple for Assur, Assur was depicted as a hero who defeated Tiamat and achieved his supremacy over other gods.⁵⁴² We can also find Sennacherib’s religious reforms in Marduk’s Ordeal, which was composed between 689 and 612 BCE.⁵⁴³ In Marduk’s Ordeal, while the Assyrian poet emphasizes Assur’s supremacy over other gods in the Assyrian version of *Enuma Elish* (line 49), he describes Marduk as a prisoner (line 58):

It is said in *Enuma Elish*:

⁵³⁸ Peter Machinist, “The Assyrians and Their Babylonian Problem: Some Reflections,” in *Jahrbuch Des Wissenschaftskolleg Zu Berlin* (Berlin: Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, 1984), 355.

⁵³⁹ Machinist, “Assyrians,” 360.

⁵⁴⁰ Frame, *Babylonia*, 57.

⁵⁴¹ Machinist, “Assyrians,” 356.

⁵⁴² Frame, “Babylon,” 27.

⁵⁴³ Alasdair Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonian Scholars* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), 222.

When heaven and earth were not created, Ansar came into being.

When city and temple came into being. Ansar had come into being. The water which over Ansar...

He is looking for Marduk. "Where is he prisoner?"⁵⁴⁴

Alasdair Livingstone has suggested that "the work relates to Sennacherib's religious reforms and is in part a justification of or theological counterpart to Sennacherib's sack of Babylon."⁵⁴⁵

Marduk's Ordeal humiliated the Babylonians. As Eckart Frahm points out, rather than praising Marduk's supremacy over other gods in Enuma Elish during the Babylonian akitu festival, it underlines Marduk's imprisonment in the Assyrian version of Enuma Elish.⁵⁴⁶ Presumably, because of Sennacherib's demoting Marduk, the Babylonians rejected the worship of Assur in Babylonia. Wolfram von Soden notes as follows:

The Babylonians also adopted the notion of religious tolerance from the Sumerians, even with respect to the gods of neighboring people, which often were subsequently identified with their own... Only Ashur, the god of the hated Assyrians, was bluntly rejected.⁵⁴⁷

By contrast, Sennacherib's successor, Esarhaddon, appeared as a representative for Babylon to establish Babylon's support for his regime. In contrast to previous scholars' lopsided opinions about Assyrian kings' cruelty, Barbara N. Porter argues that Esarhaddon strategically decided to rebuild the temple of Babylon known as Esagila and the adjoining temple tower or "ziggurat" known as Etemenanki. Of particular importance is her argument that Esarhaddon

⁵⁴⁴ Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory*, 215.

⁵⁴⁵ Livingstone, *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory*, 222.

⁵⁴⁶ Frahm, "Counter-Texts," 12.

⁵⁴⁷ Soden, *Ancient Orient*, 182.

planned to redesign Babylon as the religious center.⁵⁴⁸ While Esarhaddon transformed his capital Assur into political and military base, his primary rebuilding project for Babylon was to rebuild the temples of Marduk rather than other buildings.⁵⁴⁹ By establishing Babylon as the religious center, the Assyrian king Esarhaddon not only expected Babylonians to assimilate into the Assyrian Empire, but he also hoped to pacify rebels in Babylon.⁵⁵⁰

Esarhaddon introduced his kingship and policy through different royal inscriptions in Assyria and again in Babylon. A. Leo Oppenheim argues that the Assyrian royal inscriptions were destined to be read for future kings and thus “documents typically were placed in a position that prevented any reader from taking cognizance of their content.”⁵⁵¹ However, building upon Mario Liverani’s argument that “reading aloud was a common method of presenting texts to the Mesopotamian Public,” Porter argues that Esarhaddon’s inscriptions were proclaimed to audiences as tools of political propaganda.⁵⁵² For the Assyrian audiences, he used Babylon B and G texts, found at Nineveh. In those texts, as Esarhaddon introduced himself as a traditional king for Assyria, he emphasized his personal participation in the building of Ešarra so that “he remained the faithful servant of Assyria and her gods.”⁵⁵³ Furthermore, with regard to the destruction of Babylon in 689 BCE, Esarhaddon accuses the Babylonians of their social injustice

⁵⁴⁸ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 1–11.

⁵⁴⁹ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 66.

⁵⁵⁰ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 67.

⁵⁵¹ Adolf L. Oppenheim, “Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian Empires,” in *The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times*, ed. H. D. Lasswell, D. Lerner, and H. Speier, vol. 1, Propaganda and Communication in World History 1 (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979), 118.

⁵⁵² Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 105, 113–14.

⁵⁵³ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 94.

and oppression.⁵⁵⁴ For example, Babylon G (lines i 1'–iii 10') notes the sins of the Babylonians as follows:

They were afflicted by thieving and murdering. They were stealing from the poor and giving to the mighty; there was oppression (and). The taking of bribes in the city. Every day, without ceasing, they stole goods from each other, a son cursed his father in the street, a slave ... to his owner. His mood became furious. The Enlil of the gods, the lord of the lands, plotted evilly to scatter the land and people; his heart schemed to level the land and to destroy its people. A bitter curse was set in his mouth. Bad omens concerning the destruction of mankind occurred in heaven and on earth. He (the god Marduk) brought about [the destruction] of the city (Babylon) and reed marshes and poplars grew profusely in it and threw out many offshoots.⁵⁵⁵

On the other hand, for the Babylonians, in Babylon A, C, and E texts, Esarhaddon not only presented himself as “the representative of their traditions of kingship,”⁵⁵⁶ but also accused the Babylonians of “their neglect of their cultic duties.”⁵⁵⁷ Porter argues that Esarhaddon introduced himself as *šar māt Šumeriu Akkadi*, or “king of Sumer and Akkad,” an ancient term of Babylonia, and as *Šakkanak Bābili*, “governor, or viceroy, for Babylon.”⁵⁵⁸ Esarhaddon as a Babylonian king even practiced “bearing of the basket” as part of the inaugural ceremonies for construction work at Esagila.⁵⁵⁹ Moreover, in contrast to Babylon B and G texts, Babylon A, C, and E texts explains Marduk’s anger against the Babylonians due to their neglect of their cultic duties. For example, Babylon C (lines i 20–ii 4) notes their sins as follows:

⁵⁵⁴ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 102.

⁵⁵⁵ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 220.

⁵⁵⁶ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 71.

⁵⁵⁷ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 102.

⁵⁵⁸ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 79.

⁵⁵⁹ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 67, 82.

At that time, in the region of a previous king, bad omens occurred in Sumer and Akkad. The people living there were answering each other yes (for) no (and) were telling lies. They led their gods away, neglected their goddesses, abandoned their rites, and embraced quite different rites. They put their hands on the possessions of Esagil, the palace of the gods, an inaccessible place, and they sold the gold, silver, and precious stones at market value to the land Elam. The Enlil of the gods, the god Marduk, became angry and plotted evilly to level the land and to destroy its people. The river Arahtu, normally a river of abundance, turned into an angry wave, a raging tide, a huge flood like the deluge. It swept (its) waters destructively across the city and its shrines and turned them into ruins. The gods and goddesses dwelling in it flew up to the heavens like birds; the people living in it were hidden in another place and took refuge in an unknown land. The merciful god Marduk wrote that the calculated time of its abandonment should last 70 years, but his heart was quickly soothed, and he reversed the numbers and thus ordered its reoccupation to be after 11 years.⁵⁶⁰

Porter explains that while Esarhaddon is sympathetic to Babylonian concerns in Babylon A, C, and E, he appears as a ruler who sharply criticizes the Babylonians' behavior in Babylon B and G.⁵⁶¹

More importantly, Esarhaddon attempted to restore the statue of Marduk in order to unify Assyria and Babylonia. By restoring the worship for Marduk in Assyria, he changed Sennacherib's policy against Marduk. Instead of describing Sennacherib's usurpation of the statue of Marduk, Esarhaddon intentionally introduced that Marduk voluntarily left his city Babylon because of the sins of the Babylonians. Porter takes into consideration Esarhaddon's assertion in his inscriptions that "Marduk had become the son of Assur."⁵⁶² Esarhaddon's effort

⁵⁶⁰ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 203.

⁵⁶¹ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 103.

⁵⁶² Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 143.

to unify Assyria and Babylon culminates in the restoration of the statue of Marduk under the patronage of the Assyrian king. Esarhaddon strategically appointed his two sons. While the youngest son, Ashurbanipal received the rulership for Assyria, the oldest son Shamash-shuma-ukin received that for Babylonia.⁵⁶³ For the unification of two nations, the repatriation of the statute of Marduk from Assyria to Babylon was the last important event for Esarhaddon.⁵⁶⁴ As a result, after the death of Esarhaddon, by returning the statue of Marduk, Esarhaddon's son Shamash-Shum-Ukin ascended to his throne in Babylon through the basket carrying ceremony for the akitu festival in 668 BCE. More recently, as John P. Nielsen examined the inscription of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104 BCE) in which the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar I brought back the statue of Marduk from the Elamites, he argued that Babylonians must have welcomed the Assyrian King Esarhaddon's Marduk's return because his action echoes the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar's Marduk's return.⁵⁶⁵

The motif of Marduk's absence and return in the inscription of Esarhaddon helped biblical scholars to understand Ezekiel's theological literature. As Kutsko pays attention to the divine presence and absence in the book of Ezekiel, he argues that Ezekiel's literary structure has affinities with the inscription of Esarhaddon.⁵⁶⁶ He insists that "the Mesopotamian pattern of removal, repair, and return of deities provides the framework with which Ezekiel builds a new

⁵⁶³ Van de Mieroop, *History*, 255.

⁵⁶⁴ Porter, *Images, Power, and Politics*, 147.

⁵⁶⁵ John P. Nielsen, "Marduk's Return: Assyrian Imperial Propaganda, Babylonian Cultural Memory, and the Akītu Festival of 667 BC," in *Memory and Urban Religion in the Ancient World*, ed. Martin Bommas, Juliette Harrison, and Phoebe Roy (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 3–32.

⁵⁶⁶ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 108–49.

structure based upon his own ideological conviction.”⁵⁶⁷ For example, Ezekiel’s visionary report portrays the departure of the divine presence as the chariot throne out of the temple of Jerusalem because of its abominations (Ezekiel 8–11). However, after the purification of all abominations including the dead bodies of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel 38–39, the divine presence as the *kěvôd* YHWH returns to the new temple in Ezekiel 40–48. In a similar vein, Block highlights the role of the inscription of Esarhaddon because “it was not only composed within a century of Ezekiel’s ministry, but also presents the most complete extrabiblical account of the cycle of divine abandonment and return.”⁵⁶⁸ Of particular importance is his consideration of the different perspectives between Ezekiel and the extra-biblical texts. He insists that “whereas extra-biblical texts tend to emphasize the deity’s change of heart prior to his or her return to the shrine, Ezekiel emphasizes that by a divine act, the subjects’ hearts will be changed.”⁵⁶⁹ Indeed, the inscription of Esarhaddon does not portray any religious confessions among Babylonians prior to Marduk’s decision to return. By contrast, Ezekiel emphasizes the purification of all Babylonian exiles prior to YHWH’s return. In her commentary on Ezekiel, Margaret S. Odell’s primary interest is the inscription of Esarhaddon.⁵⁷⁰ She argues that the Assyrian political religious legacy influenced Ezekiel’s theological and literary works rather than the Neo-Babylonian religious policy.⁵⁷¹ Odell notes:

In the present commentary, it has been argued that the book of Ezekiel owes its coherence to the author’s adaptation of an ancient Near Eastern genre, the building

⁵⁶⁷ Kutsko, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 145.

⁵⁶⁸ Block, “Divine Abandonment,” 26.

⁵⁶⁹ Block, “Divine Abandonment,” 39.

⁵⁷⁰ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 4.

⁵⁷¹ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 34–37.

inscription, in which a king extols his pious acts in behalf of his god. Typically, these inscriptions follow a three-part pattern consisting of a king's self-introduction, an account of his victories, and an account of his building projects. In a few instances, a king reports steps to rebuild the city of a formerly rebellious vassal. The king may simply report that he rebuilt the city, or he may include such features as installing a new king or governor, gathering the city's scattered people, building fortresses, establishing its annual tribute and sacred offerings, pardoning the city's rebels, and changing the name.... Not only do Esarhaddon's Babylonian inscriptions help to explain the overall coherence of the book of Ezekiel, they also provide an intriguing parallel to the clustering of materials and themes in Ezek 40–48. There are differences, of course; Ezekiel does not build, as Esarhaddon does. Nevertheless, the similarities are striking.⁵⁷²

Odell also found that when Ezekiel describes Nebuchadnezzar II, he used an epithet for the Assyrian kings. According to her comment on Ezek 26:7, Ezekiel's designation of Nebuchadnezzar as "King of Kings" is an epithet that had been used of Assyrian kings since the thirteenth century BCE. and was frequently used of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal in the seventh century BCE.⁵⁷³ Furthermore, by comparing Ezekiel 40–48 to Esarhaddon's accounts, Odell interprets the measurements of the rebuilding project and the return of gods from Assur.⁵⁷⁴ Nevertheless, although Odell proves Ezekiel's appropriation of Esarhaddon's accounts, she does not further examine how Ezekiel indirectly criticized the Babylonian Empire. To understand the meaning of Marduk's return, Dale F. Launderville also draws attention to the inscription of Esarhaddon. Although Launderville's approach to Ezekiel is similar to other scholars' comparative studies, he focuses mainly on Babylonians' traumatic experiences because of

⁵⁷² Odell, *Ezekiel*, 483.

⁵⁷³ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 337.

⁵⁷⁴ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 483.

Marduk's absence in their city.⁵⁷⁵ He argues that Babylonians' theological questions of theodicy provides Ezekiel with the theological background, particularly theodicy.⁵⁷⁶

However, what scholars overlook is the fact that Ezekiel as "resistance literature" intentionally appropriates the motif of Marduk's return in the inscription of Esarhaddon to criticize the Babylonian Empire. As Launderville points out, texts regarding Marduk's return always reminded Babylonians of their past traumatic events.⁵⁷⁷ By appropriating the motif of Marduk's absence and return as hidden transcripts, Ezekiel not only expected to criticize the Babylonian Empire indirectly, but also to highlight YHWH's sovereignty over other gods. Perhaps, the battle of Gog and Magog reflects Ezekiel's resistance against his enormous enemy, the Babylonian Empire.

In my view, Ezekiel intentionally introduces the divine abandonment motif in Esarhaddon inscriptions as hidden transcripts to criticize Babylonians. As we discussed in the hidden transcript section in chapter two, the public transcript or the surface of the text in Ezek 1:1–3:15 seems to depict YHWH's mobility as His weakness after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Neo-Babylonians. On the contrary, behind this mask of the public transcript, the hidden transcripts of Ezek 1:1–3:15 describe the portrayal of the *kěvôd* of YHWH as the Assyrian god Assur. YHWH's sovereignty over the world can be compared to the Assyrian god Assur rather than the Babylonian god Marduk. In Esarhaddon's inscriptions, as Esarhaddon progressed through his several military campaigns, he always quotes the command of Assur:

⁵⁷⁵ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 180–83.

⁵⁷⁶ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 61.

⁵⁷⁷ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 4.

By the command of the god Assur, my lord, I marched triumphantly in its midst. I defeated eight kings from that district and carried off their gods, their goods, their possessions, and their people to Assyria. (Nineveh Prism B lines: iii 19–23) ⁵⁷⁸

Such a military campaign by the command of the god Assur alludes to YHWH's appearance in Ezek 1:28:

Like the appearance of the bow (נִשְׁבָּ) which is in the cloud on a day of rain, such is the appearance of the surrounding brightness. This is the appearance of the likeness of the kēvôd of YHWH. And I saw and fell on my face and heard the voice of someone speaking.

With regard to the image of YHWH in Ezek 1:28, Moshe Greenberg argues that “the characteristics of the divine manifestation in Ezekiel—the storm, the cloud, lightning, fire, and radiance” allude to “a colored ceramic from Ashur depicting the god Assur floating amidst rain clouds, accompanying his army, and shooting with a bow.”⁵⁷⁹ Following Greenberg's argument, Odell also compares Assur with the kēvôd YHWH.⁵⁸⁰ In particular, Odell argues that since Ezekiel is influenced by Assyrian royal ideology, Ezekiel envisions the vision of the four living beings, which explicitly invoked “king of the four quarters” in the Assyrian annals and inscriptions.⁵⁸¹ Assyriologists have long attempted to identify “the anthropomorphic winged disk

⁵⁷⁸ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 31.

⁵⁷⁹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20*, 53–54.

⁵⁸⁰ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 31–32. Marvin Sweeney also argues that the image of the kēvôd YHWH resembles the Ugarit/Canaanite god Baal and the Assyrian god Assur. See Marvin A. Sweeney, *Tanak: A Theological and Critical Introduction to the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 322. Contra Odell's argument, Van Wolde insists that the identification of the winged god in the sundisk represents Shamash rather than Ashur. See Ellen Van Wolde, “The God Ezekiel 1 Envisions,” in *The God Ezekiel Creates*, ed. Paul M. Joyce and Dalit Rom-Shiloni (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 104.

⁵⁸¹ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 34–37.

in a wall painting in Assur dating to the period of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890– 884 BCE).”⁵⁸² The wall painting depicts a deity who has two wings with feathers upon a brightening sun disk and also holds a bow with arrow. The deity also appears in a ninth century BCE relief from Nimrud.⁵⁸³ As Ruth Mayer-Opificius analyzes the winged disk in the Near East, she argues that the winged disk is predominantly a celestial symbol and represents Shamash rather than Assur.⁵⁸⁴ On the other hand, as Wilfred G. Lambert notes that the winged solar disk in Near Eastern art originates in the Egyptian cultural tradition and was adopted by Mesopotamia, he argues that the winged disc without another group of symbols indicates “a symbol of Assur.”⁵⁸⁵ For example, in Late Assyrian royal sculptures from Ashurnasirpal II, when the winged disc who is shooting an arrow is placed above the head of the advancing king, the passage quotes: “with the help of Assur, his lord.”⁵⁸⁶ More recently, Beate Pongratz-Leisten argues that “the Assyrians had absorbed the concept of the sun as an icon for universal control and, as such, transferred this identity to the god Assur.”⁵⁸⁷ As Pongratz-Leisten points out, it is noteworthy that since only

⁵⁸² Pongratz-Leisten Beate, “From Pictograph to Pictogram: The Solarization of Kingship in Syro-Anatolia and Assyria,” in *Cultures in Contact: From Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ed. Joan Aruz, Sarah B. Graff, and Yelena Rakic (New York: Yale University Press, 2013), 298–309.

⁵⁸³ Joel M. Lemon, “Iconographical Approaches: The Iconic Structure of Psalm 17,” in *Method Matters: Essays on the Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David L. Petersen*, ed. Joel M. Lemon and Kent H. Richards, SBLRBS 56 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 160–61.

⁵⁸⁴ Ruth Mayer-Opificius, “Die Geflügelte Sonne, Himmels- Und Regendarstellungen Im Alten Vorderasien,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 16 (1984): 201.

⁵⁸⁵ Wilfred G. Lambert, “Trees, Snakes and Gods in Ancient Syria and Anatolia,” *BSOAS* 48 (1985): 438 n.25.

⁵⁸⁶ Lambert, “Trees, Snakes and Gods,” 439 n.27.

⁵⁸⁷ Pongratz-Leisten, “From Pictograph to Pictogram,” 306.

Assur has a prerogative which orders the king to embark on a military campaign, the deity on the winged disk reflects “the communicative aspect between Assur and the king.”⁵⁸⁸

4.6. Summary

In this chapter, I explored why Ezekiel intentionally appropriates the divine abandonment motif in Assyrian religious traditions against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Influenced by Assyrian religious culture, Ezekiel not only expresses YHWH’s kingship over the world with his priestly traditions, but also appropriates Assyrian royal ideology against the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

In order to announce the Assyrian royal ideology and Assur’s hegemony over the world, the Neo-Assyrian Empire actively introduced the divine abandonment motif, especially against Babylonians. As we observed in the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Marduk’s Ordeal, and the inscription of Esarhaddon, Assyrian scribes composed their texts to justify their defeat of the Babylonians. In the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, a variety of Babylonian deities left their city Babylon due to the guilt of the Babylonian king Kashtiliash IV. In Marduk’s Ordeal, Assyrian scribes also depict the transfer of the statue of Marduk as a prisoner. Likewise, in Esarhaddon’s autobiographical apology, Marduk voluntarily left his city Babylon because of the sins of Babylonians. Assyrian scribes actively used the divine abandonment motif which symbolizes the weakness of Marduk for their political propaganda against Babylonians.

Ironically, Ezekiel as one of the conquered intentionally introduces the divine abandonment motif in Assyrian religious traditions to criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

⁵⁸⁸ Pongratz-Leisten, “From Pictograph to Pictogram,” 306.

Ezekiel introduces the divine abandonment motif to explain the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem by the Neo-Babylonian Empire. On the surface level, as if Ezekiel were a pro-Babylonian, Ezekiel's visions seem to vindicate Nebuchadnezzar II's destruction of Babylon. However, a close reading of Ezekiel texts indicate that Ezekiel intentionally appropriates Assyrian royal ideology to criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In Ezek 1:28, YHWH appears as the image of Assur: a deity who has two wings with feathers upon a brightening sun disk and also holds a bow with arrow. Because Babylonians experienced traumatic events, especially the usurpation of their patron deity Marduk by Assyrians, Ezekiel's appropriation of Assyrian religious traditions reflects his hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Moreover, while the Babylonian poet describes Marduk's weakness in the Poem of Erra, Ezekiel not only wanted to highlight YHWH's supremacy over Marduk, but also to encourage the exile community.

In the next chapter, I will analyze Ezekiel's oracles against Tyre in Ezek 26–28 as hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. To understand its structure and historical setting, it will first analyze texts through form critical methodology. Then, it will also explore how Ezekiel criticized the Neo-Babylonian Empire with the image of the ruler of Tyre.

CHAPTER FIVE: EZEKIEL'S HIDDEN TRANSCRIPTS IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

5.1. Introduction

In chapter three, we discussed the fact that Ezekiel follows the literary structure of the Sumerian city laments in order to legitimize YHWH's kingship rather than accentuating the Neo-Babylonian kingship. In chapter four, by appropriating the divine abandonment motif in Assyrian religious traditions, Ezekiel not only indirectly criticizes Marduk but also highlights his weakness. In this chapter, I will explore Ezekiel's hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, especially in Ezekiel's oracles against Tyre and Sidon and his announcement of the restoration of Jacob (26:1-28:26) using a form critical method with postcolonial interpretation. When we consider Ezekiel's locale, we become aware that he could not overtly announce his judgment oracle against Babylon. In this chapter, I argue that by using mythological texts as hidden transcripts Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

One of the mythological texts used against the Neo-Babylonian Empire is Ezekiel's oracles against Gog of Magog (Ezekiel 38–39). The identity of Gog from the north in Ezekiel 38–39 has long perplexed biblical scholars. The following have been suggested: Gog from Gyges, the name of the king of Lydia (680–650 BCE) mentioned in the annals of Ashurbanipal (668–627 BCE) or Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE or the Seleucid king Antiochus Eupator in the second century BCE.⁵⁸⁹ However, as Katheryn Pfisterer Darr points out, Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, would be the most likely candidate because the

⁵⁸⁹ Michael C. Astour, "Ezekiel's Prophecy of Gog and the Cuthean Legend of Naram-Sin," *JBL* 95 (1976): 567–79; Walther Zimmerli, *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48*, trans. Ronald E. Clement, *Hermeneia* 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 301–2; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 181; Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 433; Katheryn P. Darr, "The Book of Ezekiel," in *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 6, *The New Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 1515.

precondition for YHWH's return in the new temple in Ezekiel 40–48 is the defeat of Judah's final enemy, Nebuchadrezzar.⁵⁹⁰ Indeed, given the fact that Papyrus 967 dated from the second or the early third century CE locates Ezekiel 38–39 after Ezek 36:1–23b,⁵⁹¹ it is assumed that YHWH's last purification through His defeat of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (Ezekiel 38–39) entails the resurrection of the dry bones (37:1–14), the unity of Judah and Israel (37:15–28) and YHWH's return in the new Temple (Ezekiel 40–48). More recently, C. A. Strine has argued that Ezekiel 38–39 reflects an anti-imperial agenda, especially “an indirect challenge to Babylonian hegemony.”⁵⁹² For example, YHWH's battle with Gog at the navel of the earth (38:12) echoes “Nebuchadnezzar II's rhetoric that portrays Babylon (Marduk's cultic home) as the center of the world.”⁵⁹³ As we discussed in chapter two, based upon James C. Scott's hidden transcripts, Strine suggests that “Ezekiel 38–48 surreptitiously borrows key plot points from *Enuma Elish* in order to advance its counterdiscourse” and “Gog represents Marduk, patron deity of Babylon, divine counterpart to the human king of Babylon.”⁵⁹⁴ Since Ezekiel lived during the Babylonian Exile, he wrote Ezekiel 38–48 which contains “elusive images, polysemous language, ambiguous metaphors” in order to form “a *Chaoskampf* that resists an empire.”⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁰ Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1515.

⁵⁹¹ Johan Lust, “Ezekiel 36–40 in the Oldest Greek Manuscript,” *CBQ* 43 (1981): 517–33; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 338.

⁵⁹² Casey A. Strine, *Sworn Enemies: The Divine Oath, the Book of Ezekiel, and the Polemics of Exile* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2013); Strine, “Chaoskampf against Empire: YHWH's Battle against Gog (Ezekiel 38–39) as Resistance Literature,” in *Divination, Politics, and Ancient Near Eastern Empires*, ed. Alan Lenzi and Jonathan Stökl (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 87–108.

⁵⁹³ Strine, “Chaoskampf against Empire,” 100.

⁵⁹⁴ Strine, “Chaoskampf against Empire,” 106–07.

⁵⁹⁵ Strine, “Chaoskampf against Empire,” 108.

Ezekiel's mythological texts in Ezek 26:1-28:26 also reflect his hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Previous biblical scholarship has recognized that Ezekiel omits the oracle against Babylon, while he announces unequal length of the oracles against Tyre and Egypt in oracles against foreign nations (hereafter OAN, Ezekiel 25–32).⁵⁹⁶ In Ezekiel's oracles against nations (Ezekiel 25–32), Ezekiel announces YHWH's judgment against seven nations: Amon (Ezek 25:1–7); Moab (Ezek 25:8–11); Edom (Ezek 25:12–14); Philistia (Ezek 25:15–17); Tyre (Ezek 26:1–28:19); Sidon (Ezek 28:20–24); and Egypt (Ezek 29:1–32:32). Different from the OAN in the book of Isaiah (Isa 13:1–23:18) and the book of Jeremiah (Jer 46:1–51:64), Ezekiel omits his oracles against Babylon in the OAN. In an attempt to explain the omission of Babylon in the OAN, Walther Zimmerli and Daniel I. Block argue that since Babylon functions as YHWH's instrument in the OAN, Ezekiel omits his oracle against Babylon.⁵⁹⁷ Furthermore, they insist that Ezekiel announces his special attention given to Tyre and Egypt because they were Babylon's primary enemies.⁵⁹⁸ Block even argues that rather than YHWH's victory against the forces of evil or chaos, Ezekiel thoroughly demythologized or historicized mythological allusions in Tyre and Egypt.⁵⁹⁹ However, in contrast to Ezekiel's small oracles against five nations, his oracles against Tyre and Egypt include a wide range of mythological texts, especially the *Chaoskampf* traditions beyond historical descriptions. Over the past few decades, scholars such as Lawrence Boadt, Christoph Auffarth, Bernard F. Batto, John B. Geyer, Paul E. Fitzpatrick, Margaret Odell, Carly L. Crouch, Casey A. Strine and Marvin A. Sweeney have

⁵⁹⁶ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3–5; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3–12.

⁵⁹⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 24; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 4.

⁵⁹⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 24; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 4.

⁵⁹⁹ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 47, 120, 137.

recognized the value of mythological traditions in Tyre and Egypt.⁶⁰⁰ They have discovered that Ezekiel's mythopoeic viewpoint in the oracles against Tyre and Egypt highlights YHWH as divine king and creator. Nevertheless, they have still followed Zimmerli and Block's argument that Ezekiel advocates for Babylon's supremacy over Tyre and Egypt because Babylon is YHWH's earthly agent. However, a close reading of the Tyrian block of oracle reports in Ezek 26:1–28:26 reflects Ezekiel's polemics as hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. First, the Neo-Babylonian Empire failed to conquer Tyre on the historical level, whereas YHWH as divine king realizes his plan on the metahistorical level.⁶⁰¹ According to Ezekiel's historical description (Ezek 26:7–14), Nebuchadrezzar's siege and destruction of Tyre looks successful. But as Jewish historian Flavius Josephus notes (*Against Apion* 1.21, section 156; *Antiquities* 10.11.1, section 228),⁶⁰² the thirteen years siege of Tyre could not bring about the defeat of Tyre

⁶⁰⁰ H. J. van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26, 1-28, 19): A New Approach*, Biblica et Orientalia 20 (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1968); Lawrence Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980); Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies in Ezekiel's Oracles of Judgment," in *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation* (ed. Johan Lust; BETL 74; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 211–31; Christoph Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang: "Schöpfung" in Mythos Und Ritual Im Alten Orient Und in Griechenland Am Beispiel Der Odyssee Und Des Ezechielbuches* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 78–118; Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 153–67; Margaret S. Odell, *Ezekiel* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2005), 344; John B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles About the Nations*, SOTSMS (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 3–15, 39–74; Carly L. Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare," *JBL* 130 (2011): 473–92; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books: Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-Biblical Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 203–18; Carly L. Crouch and Casey A. Strine, "YHWH's Battle against Chaos in Ezekiel: The Transformation of Judahite Mythology for a New Situation," *JBL* 132 (2013): 883–903.

⁶⁰¹ With respect to "the historical level" and "the metahistorical level" in the book of Ezekiel, building upon Bernard F. Batto's argument, Lawrence Boadt asserts that the book of Ezekiel intends "the double series as two different levels of destruction and restoration." Thus, he argues that while Ezek 25-32 reflects the historical level, Ezek 38-39 portrays the metahistorical level. See Boadt, "Rhetorical Strategies," 227.

⁶⁰² Katzenstein, *ABD*, 6:690; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 23; Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 21–31; H. Jacob Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre, from the Beginning of the Second Millenium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E.* (Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University, 1997), 325; Maria E. Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies and Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 59–60; Martin A. Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles Against Tyre: Historical Reality and Motivations*, *BibOr* 46 (Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2002), 57–65; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 131–32. According to Katzenstein, Josephus's statement about Nebuchadnezzar's besiegement of Tyre for thirteen years was taken from the book of Menander of Ephesus. See Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 325.

(571 BCE, Ezek 29:17–21). In fact, Tyre was conquered in the time of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.⁶⁰³ However, on the metahistorical level, Ezekiel intentionally introduces mythical elements at the last part of each oracle against Tyre (Ezek 26:19–21; 27:26–36; 28:6–10; and 28:16b–19). Such mythical elements symbolize YHWH’s sovereignty over the world rather than Marduk’s. His ultimate victory against chaos is far stronger than Marduk. Second, Ezek 26:1–28:26 highlights YHWH’s enthronement at the New Year festival rather than Marduk’s enthronement at the Babylonian akitu Festival.⁶⁰⁴ Christoph Auffarth and Dale F. Launderville called attention to the ship of Tyre, which alludes to “a processional ship for Marduk for the New Year festival.”⁶⁰⁵ On the eighth day of Nisan at the Babylonian akitu festival,⁶⁰⁶ the procession of Marduk’s statue in his beautiful ship on the canal can be compared to the beautiful ship of Tyre (cf. the Hebrew noun יָפִי, “beauty” occurs three times in Ezek 27. cf. Ezek 27:3, 4, and 11). While the Jews of the Exile including Ezekiel participated in this festival, they could see its movement into the Esagila, Marduk’s palace in Babylon. When we consider that a large moat was outside the high wall which surrounded Babylon,⁶⁰⁷ the ship of Tyre in the midst of the sea in Ezek 27 alludes to the city of Babylon. By using the metaphor of a beautiful ship Tyre, Ezekiel criticizes Marduk’s ship as well. Furthermore, just as Babylonians emphasize the

⁶⁰³ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 5. Markus Saur argues that Ezek 26–28 reflects the siege and downfall of the city by the campaign of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. See Markus Saur, “Ezekiel 26–28 and the History of Tyre,” *SJOT* 24 (2010): 208–21.

⁶⁰⁴ For a discussion of the Babylonian Akitu Festival, see Jacob Klein, “Akitu,” *ABD* 1:138–40; Julye Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia* (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2004), 46–129.

⁶⁰⁵ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93–94; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 151–52, 155.

⁶⁰⁶ Benjamin D. Sommer, “The Babylonian Akitu Festival: Rectifying the King or Renewing the Cosmos?,” *JANES* 27 (2000): 89.

⁶⁰⁷ Marc Van de Mieroop, “Reading Babylon,” *AJA* 107 (2003): 262.

Babylonian king's humiliation before the king's re-enthronement at the Babylonian akitu Festival,⁶⁰⁸ Ezekiel criticizes the king of Tyre's hubris in Ezek 28:1–19. After Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon (Ezek 28:20–23), Ezekiel announces YHWH's restoration for Jacob (Ezek 28:24–26). This literary sequence is similar to Marduk's enthronement during the Babylonian akitu Festival. However, Ezekiel in his oracles emphasizes YHWH's enthronement rather than Marduk's.

In this chapter, while I consider Ezekiel's hidden transcripts in the oracles against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, I will first explore each text from a form critical method: (1) Structure (*Form*), (2) Genre (*Gattung*), (3) Setting (*Sitz im Leben*), and (4) Intention. In particular, with respect to intention, I will analyze texts with post-colonial perspective. More recently, Hugh S. Pyper's *Postcolonialism and Propaganda in Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations* offers a convincing argument for the possibilities that postcolonial approaches can bring to an understanding of the OAN in the book of Jeremiah.⁶⁰⁹ He argues that in the OAN the powerless use “mythical and cultic elements, drawn from the oppressors' own ideology” as their polemics against the Neo-Babylonian Empire.⁶¹⁰ His argument allows us to understand how Ezekiel uses his mythical and cultic elements, drawn from the Neo-Babylonian Empire's ideology. As we discussed in chapter two, Bhabha's ideas help us to understand Ezekiel as a mimic man who reveals his hybridity: a Zadokite priest who was acculturated into Babylonian society.⁶¹¹ Ezekiel

⁶⁰⁸ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 93–103.

⁶⁰⁹ Hugh S. Pyper, “Postcolonialism and Propaganda in Jeremiah's Oracles against the Nations,” in *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, ed. Else K. Holt, Hyun Chul Paul Kim, and Andrew Mein (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 145–57.

⁶¹⁰ Pyper, “Postcolonialism and Propaganda,” 153.

⁶¹¹ Vanderhooft evaluated several acculturation strategies that appear in Ezekiel. He argues that “while the prophet may not reflect self-consciously on the particular mechanisms of Babylonian imperial rule, he did adopt

imitates the culture of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which is “mimicry —*almost the same but not quite*.”⁶¹² On the surface, Ezekiel’s mimicry seems not to be resistant to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. However, as Bhabha emphasizes, it menaces “the narcissistic demand of colonial authority.”⁶¹³

5.2. Structure of Ezek 26:1-28:26

Building upon the systematic Christian theology, most Ezekielian scholars have generally argued that the literary form of the book of Ezekiel comprises three major sections: 1) Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment against Israel (Ezek 1–24); 2) Ezekiel’s oracles of judgment against the nations (Ezek 25–32); and 3) Ezekiel’s oracles of restoration for Israel and the nations of the world (Ezek 33–48).⁶¹⁴ Joseph Blenkinsopp even considers that the OAN (Ezek 25–32) in the middle of the book follows the pattern in Isaiah and in the LXX version of Jeremiah.⁶¹⁵ In contrast, Marvin A. Sweeney argues that “a closer examination of the book’s literary features demonstrates that such a reading is unwarranted.”⁶¹⁶ Indeed, Ezekiel’s oracle of judgment against Israel also appears in Ezekiel 33–48, especially in Ezek 33:21-29. According to Sweeney’s

significant elements of the Babylonian cultural repertoire for the purpose not of criticizing the dominant culture, but for criticizing his own Judean community.” Although I disagree with his argument, his social scientific research on the phenomenon of acculturation in Ezekiel is valuable. See David S. Vanderhooft, “Ezekiel in and on Babylon,” in *Bible et Proche-Orient: Mélanges André Lemaire*, ed. J. M. Durand and J. Elayi, Transeuphratène 46 (Paris: Gabalda, 2014), 99–119.

⁶¹² Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 127.

⁶¹³ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 126.

⁶¹⁴ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3–5; Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles against Egypt*, 7–8; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 107–12; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3–12.

⁶¹⁵ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 107.

⁶¹⁶ Marvin A. Sweeney, “Ezekiel’s Conceptualization of the Exile in Intertextual Perspective,” *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 1 (2012): 156.

formal analysis, the sequence of chronological statements (Ezek 1:1–3; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1; 29:17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1; 32:17; 33:21; and 40:1) identifies and introduces “the units that constitute the formal literary structure of the book of Ezekiel from Ezekiel’s thirtieth until his fiftieth year.”⁶¹⁷ Furthermore, Sweeney also argues that “the prophetic word formula *wayehi debar yhwh ‘el PN* [Proper Name] *l’emor*, ‘and the word of YHWH came to me PN [Proper name], saying,’ define ‘the subunits within each unit defined by a chronological formula.’”⁶¹⁸ Thus, Sweeney suggests the thirteen-part formal structure for the book of Ezekiel as follows:

Ezekiel’s visions concerning the purging and Restoration of Jerusalem

- I. Introduction: Ezekiel’s oracles concerning his inaugural vision (Ezek 1–7)
- II. Ezekiel’s oracles concerning his vision of YHWH’s departure from the Jerusalem Temple and this event’s significance (Ezek 8–19)
- III. Ezekiel’s oracles concerning the punishment of all Israel (Ezek 20–23)
- IV. Symbolic actions concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the punishment of neighboring nations (Ezek 26–28)
- V. Oracles concerning Tyre and its rulers (Ezek 26–28)
- VI. The first oracle concerning Egypt (Ezek 29:1–16)
- VII. The second block of oracles concerning Egypt (Ezek 29:17–30:19)
- VIII. The first oracle concerning Pharaoh (Ezek 30:20–26)
- IX. The second oracle concerning Pharaoh (Ezek 31)
- X. The third oracle concerning Pharaoh and Egypt (Ezek 32:1–16)
- XI. Final oracles concerning the nations and Ezekiel’s role as watchman (Ezek 32:17–33:20)
- XII. Oracles concerning the restoration of Israel (Ezek 33:21–39:29)
- XIII. The vision of the restored temple (Ezek 40–48)⁶¹⁹

In addition to Sweeney’s literary form of Ezekiel, I suggest that the literary form of Ezekiel also reflects YHWH’s kingship. After the Babylonians deported Ezekiel and his exile communities in 597 BCE (Ezek 1:1–3), Ezekiel needs to reconsider YHWH’s kingship. According to ancient

⁶¹⁷ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 4–9.

⁶¹⁸ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 8.

⁶¹⁹ Sweeney, “Ezekiel’s Conceptualization,” 157; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 8–9.

Near Eastern royal ideology, the earthly king functions as a representative for the patron deity.⁶²⁰ Thus, the Neo-Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem (587–586 BCE) challenged Ezekiel and his exile community to reconsider YHWH’s kingship. As we discussed in chapter two, in an attempt to highlight YHWH’s kingship for exiles, Ezekiel appropriates the literary structure of the Sumerian city laments for the exiles in Babylon in the didactic form. Their earthly king was defeated by the Neo-Babylonian Empire because of their sacrilege and hubris against YHWH. Thus, YHWH brought destruction on the Jerusalem temple. But in the end, YHWH will return as a true king for exiles after He purges all who are unclean in the land. Ezekiel’s theocentric viewpoint for YHWH’s kingship can be described in the literary form of Ezekiel as follows:

- I. YHWH’s presence for the exiles in Chebar and Ezekiel’s sign acts for the destined fall of Jerusalem: The emphasis of YHWH’s sovereignty over the world (Ezek 1–7)
- II. YHWH’s departure from Jerusalem on account of idolatries and abominations in Jerusalem: Reevaluation of Israelite kingship in Israel (Ezek 8–19)
- III. YHWH’s deliverance for the second exodus generation and His judgment oracle against Jerusalem (Ezek 20–23)
- IV. YHWH’s impending fury against Jerusalem and her neighboring nations such as Amon and Edom (Ezek 24–25)
- V. YHWH’s judgment against Tyre through king Nebuchadrezzar and the restoration of Jacob (Ezek 26–28)
- VI. YHWH’s first judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt (Ezek 29:1–16)
- VII. YHWH’s second and third judgments against Egypt through King Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek 29:17–30:19)
- VIII. YHWH’s fourth judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt through king of Babylon (Ezek 30:20–26)
- IX. YHWH’s fifth judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt through the image of cedar (Ezek 31:1–18)
- X. YHWH’s sixth judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt (Ezek 32:1–16)
- XI. YHWH’s seventh judgment against Egypt and Nations and Ezekiel’s role as watchman (Ezek 32:17–33:20)
- XII. YHWH’s judgment against Jerusalem and His restoration for the new Jerusalem as Eden (Ezek 33:21–39:29)
- XIII. YHWH’s kingship in the restored Temple (Ezek 40–48)

⁶²⁰ Erica Ehrenberg, “Dieu et Mon Droit: Kingship in Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times,” in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), 103.

Ezek 26:1–28:26 appears within the fifth major segment of the book (Ezekiel 26–28), which takes up YHWH’s judgment against Tyre through King Nebuchadrezzar and the restoration of Jacob. Previous biblical scholarship has separated Ezekiel’s prophecies against Sidon and the restoration of Jacob in Ezek 28:20–26 from Ezek 26:1–28:26.⁶²¹ Zimmerli and Block assert that the OAN (Ezek 25–32) is dominated by the number seven, which is related to seven nations to be destroyed in Deuteronomy 7:1.⁶²² Especially, Block convincingly argues that “the words of hope inserted in 28:24–26 function as a fulcrum, dividing Ezekiel’s oracles against foreign nations into two sensitively balanced halves, virtually identical in length.”⁶²³ Thus, he insists that in the second half, seven oracles against Egypt balances previous seven mini-oracles against seven nations.⁶²⁴ However, the prophetic pronouncements concerning Tyre and Sidon and the restoration of Jacob in Ezek 26:1–28:26 are clearly demarcated by chronological formulae (Ezek 26:1, 29:1). As we discussed above, based upon Sweeney’s structural analysis, the chronological formula introduces the major structural units of the book.⁶²⁵ Ezek 26:1–28:26 begins with an introductory chronological formula with the prophetic word formula in Ezek 26:1, “and in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of YHWH came to me, saying.” Since the next chronological formula appears in Ezek 29:1 “in the tenth year, on the

⁶²¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 96–101; Hals, *Ezekiel*, 201–3; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 121–28.

⁶²² Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 4–5.

⁶²³ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 4.

⁶²⁴ By doubling the oracles against Benne Ammon (25:1–5 and 6–7), Block insists that “the dropping of Egypt is compensated.” See Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 5. Paul R. Raabe also follows Block’s structure without examining the meaning of the chronological formula. See Paul R. Raabe, “Transforming the International Status Quo: Ezekiel’s Oracles against the Nations,” in *Transforming Visions: Transformations of Text, Tradition, and Theology in Ezekiel*, ed. Michael A. Lyons and William A. Tooman, Princeton Theological Monograph Series 127 (Eugene: Pickwick, 2010), 190–91.

⁶²⁵ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 205.

twelfth day of the tenth month, the word of YHWH came to me, saying,” it is observed that Ezek 26:1–28:26 is identified as a major unit.

In particular, the literary style of Ezek 26:1–28:26 is different from previous oracles against four nations (Ezek 25:1–17), except Ezek 26:1–6, 28:1–10, and Ezek 28:20–26. When we compare Ezek 26:1–28:26 with previous oracles against four nations in Ezekiel 25, two similar literary styles can be observed. First, Ezek 26:1–28:26 also introduces the genre of prophetic proof saying: because (יַעַן) – therefore (לְכֵן) pattern. Just as previous oracles against four nations in Ezekiel 25 introduces the pattern, “because (יַעַן) PN (nation) did something, therefore (לְכֵן), I will do...,” the oracle against Tyre in Ezek 26:1–6 also follows such a sequence: “Ben Adam, because (יַעַן) Tyre said concerning Jerusalem...” (26:2a) – “Therefore (לְכֵן) thus says the LORD; Here I am against you, O Tyre!” (26:3). Ezek 28:1–10 also introduces the genre of prophetic proof saying as well (v. 2, 6, 7). But the content of the reason for YHWH’s judgment against the ruler of Tyre in Ezek 28:2a¹⁰-5 is unusually lengthy. Second, Ezekiel uses YHWH’s recognition formula יִדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה and they shall know that I am YHWH.” Ezekiel frequently uses the recognition formula after his judgment announcement against nations in Ezekiel 25. Likewise, the recognition formula occurs in Ezek 26:6b, 28:22b, 23b, 24b, and 26b. Nevertheless, in addition to these two literary styles, Ezekiel inserts the story of Nebuchadrezzar’s attack against Tyre (26:7–14), a dirge against Tyre by coastlands (26:15–18), YHWH’s apocalyptic judgment against Tyre (26:19–21), a dirge against the beautiful ship of Tyre (27:1–36), YHWH’s judgment against the hubris of the ruler of Tyre (28:1–10), and a dirge against YHWH’s judgment against the king of Tyre (28:11–19) within the Tyrian oracles. Zimmerli argues that Ezek 26:2–6 is connected with the forms of speech in Ezekiel 25 but Ezek

26:7–14 presents “a process of expository amplification.”⁶²⁶ It is not clear why Ezekiel inserts such long oracles against Tyre after Ezek 26:1–6. Furthermore, we do not know why Ezekiel’s oracles against Tyre are located before the stereotyped oracle against Sidon. In my opinion, while on a surface level Ezekiel follows the stereotypical patterns of previous oracles against nations, Ezekiel wants to highlight the importance of his message against Tyre for his audiences. Regarding Ezekiel’s rhetorical strategy for his audiences, I will explain in the intention section.

With respect to Ezekiel’s oracles against Tyre (Ezek 26:1–28:19), the recurrent refrain, בְּלִהְיוֹת אֶתְנָן וְאִינָן, “Horrors I will bring about and you shall be no more” at the end of each Tyre oracle (Ezek 26:21a, 27:36b, and 28:19b) creates a single literary unity. According to Zimmerli, the redactor inserted these concluding verses to intend “only three units and have regarded the two oracles 28:1–10 and 28:11–19 as a unified whole.”⁶²⁷ More recently, as Greg Schmidt Goering also notices the rhetorical function of the refrain, he argues that “it brackets these passages from what comes before and after, thus packaging them as a unity.”⁶²⁸ Presumably, Ezekiel’s oracles against the ruler of Tyre (Ezek 28:1–10) and the king of Tyre (Ezek 28:11–19) should be interpreted as a unit together.

The next literary device within Ezek 26:1–28:19 is the prophetic word formula, הָיָה דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר, “the word of YHWH came to me, saying,” in Ezek 26:1b, 27:1, 28:1, 28:11, and 28:20, which introduces the five oracular accounts. The first prophetic word formula introduces Ezekiel’s first oracular account concerning the downfall of the city Tyre by king

⁶²⁶ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 33.

⁶²⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 22.

⁶²⁸ Greg Schmidt Goering, “Proleptic Fulfillment of the Prophetic Word: Ezekiel’s Dirges over Tyre and Its Ruler,” *JSOT* 36 (2012): 485.

Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek 26:1–21). The second prophetic word formula introduces the second oracular account concerning the wreck of the ship of Tyre (Ezek 27:1–36). The third prophetic word formula introduces the third oracular account concerning the ruler (נְגִיד) of Tyre (Ezek 28:1–10). The fourth prophetic word formula introduces the fourth oracular account concerning the king (מֶלֶךְ) of Tyre (Ezek 28:11–19). The fifth prophetic word formula introduces the fifth oracular account concerning the downfall of Sidon and the restoration of Jacob (Ezek 28:20–26). With regard to the function of the fifth oracular account, Sweeney argues that “the downfall of Tyre and Sidon will lead to the restoration of Israel as part of the overall concern with revealing YHWH to Israel.”⁶²⁹

Based upon the two literary devices, the literary structure of Ezek 26:1–28:19 presents two pairs, each with a judgment and a lament.⁶³⁰ Daniel I. Block suggests the following ABAB pattern:

- A Announcement of judgment upon Tyre (26:1–21)
- B Lament over the fall of Tyre (27:1–36)
- A Announcement of judgment upon the king of Tyre (28:1–10)
- B Lament over the fall of the king of Tyre (28:11–19)⁶³¹

Likewise, John T. Strong’s analysis resembles Block’s literary structure but suggests the function of oracular formulae as closing formulae. In addition to the two literary devices, Strong argues that Ezekiel’s two oracular formulae, נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה “utterance of my LORD, YHWH,” in Ezek

⁶²⁹ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 132.

⁶³⁰ The dirge in Ezek 26:17–18 is not lamented by Ezekiel himself, but by princes of coastlands (cf. v. 16). Ezekiel as YHWH’s mouthpiece announces his lament in 27:3 and 28:11.

⁶³¹ Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 28.

26:5b and 28:10b function as closing formulae for Ezekiel’s judgment oracle against Tyre.⁶³² In light of this, Strong suggests four separate pieces of the Tyrian oracles: 26:1–5a; 27:1–36; 28:1–10; 28:11–19.⁶³³ Strong’s outline of the original layer in the Tyrian oracles is as follows:

Ezek 26:1–5a	bipartite judgment oracle against the city, Tyre
Ezek 27:1–9a, 25b–36	lament over Tyre, cast as a ship
Ezek 28:1–10	bipartite judgment oracle against Tyre’s leader
Ezek 28:11–19	lament over Tyre’s leader, cast as a signet seal ⁶³⁴

Thus, as Strong considers 26:1–28:19 as a single literary work, such a single elaborate analogy in the Tyrian oracles connotes that “just as a seal carries the authority and will of the distant owner upon a merchant ship, so too does a prince bear the authority and will of the gods for his city.”⁶³⁵ Based upon this structure, Strong asserts that the oracles against Tyre present a unified theme: “Jerusalem, not Tyre, was the seat of the Great King.”⁶³⁶

In sum, the literary structure of Ezek 26:1–28:26 portrays YHWH’s kingship over the nations and His restoration for Jacob, which will be fulfilled by king Nebuchadrezzar. The overall literary structure of Ezekiel 1–48 highlights YHWH’s kingship on the new temple. Ezekiel announces that the defeat of the Israelite does not mean the defeat of their deity, YHWH. Rather, YHWH intentionally purges the profaned city Jerusalem through king Nebuchadrezzar. This literary sequence is also reflected in Ezek 26:1–28:26. In Ezekiel 25–32, seven nations will

⁶³² John T. Strong, “Ezekiel’s Oracles against the Nations within the Context of his Message” (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, 1993), 180–81.

⁶³³ Strong, “Ezekiel’s Oracles,” 181.

⁶³⁴ John T. Strong, “In Defense of the Great King,” in *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, ed. Else K. Holt, Hyun Chul Paul Kim, and Andrew Mein (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 181–85.

⁶³⁵ Strong, “Great King,” 182–83.

⁶³⁶ Strong, “Great King,” 185.

be purged by king Nebuchadrezzar as the earthly agent for YHWH. As Ezekiel considers this scenario, he emphasizes that the downfall of Tyre and Sidon will facilitate the restoration of Israel. Thus, the overall literary structure of Ezek 26:1–28:26 can be presented in Ezek 26:1–28:26 as follows:

- A. The first announcement of judgment oracle against Tyre (Ezek 26:1–21)
- B. The dirge over Tyre, the beautiful ship (Ezek 27:1–36)
- C. The second announcement of judgment oracle against the ruler of Tyre (Ezek 28:1–10)
- D. The dirge over Tyre, the king of Tyre (Ezek 28:11–19)
- E. The fifth oracular account concerning Sidon and the restoration of Israel (Ezek 28:20–26)

However, there remain unanswered questions regarding the existence of Babylon. Is YHWH's restored new temple in Ezek 40–48 possible without the extermination of Israel's final enemy, Babylon? Why does Ezekiel choose Tyre as his ultimate enemy by first introducing the name of king of Babylon, Nebuchadrezzar (Ezek 26:7)?⁶³⁷ Why does Ezekiel announce his judgment oracles against Tyre with mythical images? Why is the king of Tyre accused of his profanation of sanctuaries in Ezek 28:18? These questions will be answered in the following analysis of each text in Ezek 26:1–28:26.

5.3. The First announcement of Judgment Oracle against Tyre (Ezek 26:1–21)

5.3.1. Translation and Critical notes

⁶³⁷ While Nebuchadnezzar occurs fifty-five times in 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, Nebuchadrezzar occurs thirty-three times in Jeremiah and Ezekiel. D. J. Wiseman argues that Nebuchadrezzar is "a near transliteration of the Babylonian royal name which is likewise written with various syllabic spellings *na-bi-um-ku-du0ur/dur/dúr/-ri/ru-ú/u-šu-úr/šur* or, more commonly in Sumerian with logograms (^dna.níg.du.uri or ^dna.níg.du.šeš) and this may indicate a closer contact with the name as pronounced." See Donald J. Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 2–3. Contra Wiseman, Aaron Hornkohl insists that the shift from r to n in Nebuchadnezzar's name is evidence of the Late Biblical Hebrew because of the influence of the Aramaic language. See Aaron D. Hornkohl, *Ancient Hebrew Periodization and the Language of the Book of Jeremiah: The Case for a Sixth-Century Date of Composition* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 54–55.

¹ and in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month,⁶³⁸ the word of YHWH came to me, saying,

² Ben Adam, because (וַיֵּן) Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, “Aha!”⁶³⁹ Door(s)⁶⁴⁰ of the peoples was broken, she was turned to me.

I shall be filled⁶⁴¹ She was laid in ruins

³ Therefore (לָכֵן) thus says the LORD⁶⁴²; Here I am against you, O Tyre!

and I will bring many nations against you, as the sea brings its waves.

⁴ And they will destroy the walls of Tyre and throw down her⁶⁴³ towers and I will scrape her soil from her

and I make her *a bare rock*.

⁵ *Spreading place of nets.*⁶⁴⁴ She will be *in the midst of the sea*.

For (כִּי) I, I spoke, the utterance of my LORD⁶⁴⁵ YHWH

and she will become spoil for the nations,⁶⁴⁶

⁶³⁸ LXX (Codex Alexandrinus) renders the chronological formula as “in the twelfth year, on the first day of the month.”

⁶³⁹ The Hebrew interjection אָהָא “Aha!” occurs three times in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 25:3; 26:2; and 36:2).

⁶⁴⁰ Since the Hebrew noun דִּלְתוֹת “door” is feminine plural noun, its verb should be plural. But the Kethib of the MT has the Hebrew verb נִשְׁבְּרָה “were broken” as niph'al perfect third feminine singular.

⁶⁴¹ LXX renders this sentence as ἡ πλήρης “she that was full.” Targum renders it as מְלֵאָה. Probably read מְלֵאָה as feminine singular.

⁶⁴² LXX omits the LORD.

⁶⁴³ LXX reads her towers as your towers.

⁶⁴⁴ The Hebrew noun כְּרִם “net” occurs four times in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 26:5, 26:14, 32:3, 47:10).

⁶⁴⁵ LXX omits the LORD.

⁶⁴⁶ According to critical apparatus, it might be added.

⁶ And her daughters who⁶⁴⁷ are in the field shall be killed by the sword

and they shall know that I am the LORD.

⁷ For (יְהוָה)⁶⁴⁸, thus the LORD⁶⁴⁹ YHWH

Here I am bringing against⁶⁵⁰ Tyre, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon from the north, king of kings

With horse and chariot, and horsemen, and with⁶⁵¹ a great assembly of troops.

⁸ Your daughters in the field, he shall kill with the sword

And he will set up⁶⁵² a siege-wall against you and pour a mound against you and raise a large shield against you.

⁹ Thrust⁶⁵³ of the battering ram⁶⁵⁴ against your walls

And your towers he will pull down with his swords.

¹⁰ From a multitude of his horses, he will cover you with dust

From the voice of horseman and wheel and chariot,⁶⁵⁵ your walls shall shake

When he enters your gates like those⁶⁵⁶ entering a breached city.

⁶⁴⁷ LXX omits the relative. Cf. Syriac

⁶⁴⁸ The Hebrew particle יְ connects v. 7 with its previous parts (v. 1-6).

⁶⁴⁹ LXX omits the LORD.

⁶⁵⁰ Regarding the preposition לְ, the LXX Q544 renders it as ἐπὶ σέ “upon you.”

⁶⁵¹ Some MT manuscripts add the preposition בְּ; cf. The LXX and Syriac.

⁶⁵² Targum renders it as “to build” בְּנֶה; cf. 4:2, 17, 17, 21, and 27.

⁶⁵³ Hapax legomenon.

⁶⁵⁴ Hapax legomenon. Greenberg translates “thrust of the battering ram” as “the storm of his battle.” His guess is based on Akkadian *meḥu* “storm” and *qablu* “battle.” See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 533.

⁶⁵⁵ τῶν ἰππέων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν τροχῶν τῶν ἀρμάτων αὐτοῦ; The LXX (Syriac) reads this sentence as “his horsemen and the wheels of his chariots.”

¹¹ With the hoofs of his horses, he shall trample all your streets.

He shall kill your people with the sword and your strong pillars shall fall⁶⁵⁷ to the ground.

¹² And they shall plunder⁶⁵⁸ your wealth and loot your merchandise and throw down your walls and your splendid houses they shall pull down

And your stones and your tree and your dust, they shall cast *in the midst of waters*⁶⁵⁹

¹³ And I⁶⁶⁰ will put an end to the murmur of your songs

and the sound of your lyres shall be heard no more.

¹⁴ And I will make you *a bare rock*, you⁶⁶¹ shall be *spreading place of nets*

You shall be built⁶⁶² no more

For I, YHWH, I spoke. the utterance of my LORD.⁶⁶³

¹⁵ Thus says the LORD⁶⁶⁴ YHWH concerning Tyre

Will not the coastlands tremble at the voice of your downfall when the wounded groan, when slaughter is killed⁶⁶⁵ in the midst of you?

⁶⁵⁶ Probably singular. Cf. the LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate

⁶⁵⁷ Since the Hebrew verb יָרַד “come down” is qal imperfect third feminine singular, the critical apparatus recommends its reading as hiphil third masculine singular. Cf. the LXX, Syriac, and Targum.

⁶⁵⁸ LXX reads the verb in singular.

⁶⁵⁹ LXX, Syriac, and some Hebrew manuscripts read it singular, the sea.

⁶⁶⁰ Subject changes from the third masculine singular or the third masculine plural to the first common singular.

The LXX v967 reads the subject in the third masculine singular. Cf. 12a

⁶⁶¹ Critical apparatus recommends its reading as the third feminine singular.

⁶⁶² Critical apparatus recommends its reading as the third feminine singular.

⁶⁶³ Vulgate, many manuscripts, the LXX B, Syriac, and Targum delete “the LORD.”

⁶⁶⁴ Many manuscripts and the LXX delete “the LORD.”

¹⁶ And all princes of the sea shall step down from upon their thrones and they shall take off their robes and strip off embroidered garments

With trembling⁶⁶⁶ they shall put on. On the ground they shall sit and tremble every moment

And they shall be appalled at you.

¹⁷ And they shall raise a dirge⁶⁶⁷ over you, and they shall say to you,

How you have perished,⁶⁶⁸ inhabited⁶⁶⁹ from the seas / the city is renowned

Who was strong in the sea / She and her inhabitants.⁶⁷⁰

Who imposed their terror⁶⁷¹ to every her inhabitants⁶⁷²

¹⁸ Now (עַתָּה), the coastlands⁶⁷³ will tremble, The day⁶⁷⁴ of your downfall

And the coastlands that in the sea will be in dismay at your passing.⁶⁷⁵

¹⁹ For thus says the LORD⁶⁷⁶ YHWH, when I make you, a ruined city like cities that are not inhabited

⁶⁶⁵ LXX reads this sentence as τῷ σπάσαι μάχαιραν when they have drawn a sword.

⁶⁶⁶ Probably קְדָרוֹת “darkness” or תְּגָרוֹת “girdles.”

⁶⁶⁷ The Hebrew noun קִינָה “dirge” occurs ten times in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 2:10; 19:1, 14 (twice); 26:17; 27:2, 32; 28:12; 32:2, 16).

⁶⁶⁸ LXX omits the verb.

⁶⁶⁹ LXX reads it as κατελύθης “you were destroyed.”

⁶⁷⁰ LXX omits this part

⁶⁷¹ LXX renders it as δοῦσα τὸν φόβον αὐτῆς “who brings her terror.”

⁶⁷² Targum renders this part as “How they were given to their terror.”; Cf. Syriac A.

⁶⁷³ Many manuscripts render the noun as הָאֲיִם “the coast lands.”

⁶⁷⁴ LXX render it as “from the day” ἀφ’ ἡμέρας, Many manuscripts, Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate render it as קִיּוֹם “on the day.”

⁶⁷⁵ LXX omits “your passing.”

When (I) bring you⁶⁷⁷ *the deep* and *the great waters* will cover you

²⁰ and I will bring you down, with⁶⁷⁸ those who go down to the pit⁶⁷⁹, to the people of long ago
and I will make you dwell in the land of lowest places like⁶⁸⁰ the ancient ruins, with those who
go down to the pit so that you will dwell

And I will not give splendor⁶⁸¹ in the land of the living.

²¹ *Horrors I will bring about and you shall be no more*

And you shall be sought but you shall not be found⁶⁸² again forever, the utterance of my
LORD⁶⁸³ YHWH.

5.3.2. Structure⁶⁸⁴

I.	Autobiographical Introduction	26:1
A.	Chronological formula	1a
B.	Prophetic word formula	1b
II.	First oracle against Tyre with a three-part proof oracle	2–6
A.	Reason of the Prophetic Judgment: Tyre’s gloating over the downfall of Jerusalem (The Hebrew interjection אָהָא “Aha” by Tyre)	2
B.	Therefore (כֵּן) pattern with the prophetic messenger formula	3aαβ
C.	Announcement of YHWH’s judgment against Tyre by nations	3aγ–6
1.	YHWH Himself will be against Tyre	3aγ
2.	Nations as YHWH’s agents will be against Tyre	3b

⁶⁷⁶ LXX omits “the LORD.”

⁶⁷⁷ LXX adds suffix first common singular. The Vulgate renders it as “and I will bring.”

⁶⁷⁸ Many manuscripts use the Hebrew preposition לְ “to.”

⁶⁷⁹ This phrase occurs seven times in the book of Ezekiel (Ezek 26:20; 31:14, 16; 32:18, 24, 25, 30).

⁶⁸⁰ Probably read this as כִּי “with.” Cf. Many manuscripts, Vulgate, and Syriac.

⁶⁸¹ LXX renders it as μηδὲ ἀνασταθῆς “no stand up.”

⁶⁸² LXX omits this part.

⁶⁸³ LXX omits the LORD.

⁶⁸⁴ I referred to Ronald M. Hals’ structural analysis. But his description of contents and the term of prophetic formulae is different from mine. See Hals, *Ezekiel*, 186–87.

3.	The Attack of Nations against Tyre: The walls of Tyre and her towers	4aα
4.	YHWH Himself will scrape Tyre and make it a bare rock	4aβ–4b
5.	The future of Tyre as Spreading nets in the midst of the sea	5aα
6.	Conclusion formula	5aβ
7.	The prophetic oracular formula	5aγ
8.	Short additional description: Spoil for the nations and destruction of satellites cities of Tyre	5b–6a
D.	The Recognition formula	6b
III.	Second oracle against Tyre through king Nebuchadrezzar	7–14
A.	The Hebrew preposition כִּי “for” and the prophetic messenger formula	7aα
B.	Announcement of YHWH’s judgment against Tyre	7aβ–14
1.	YHWH Himself will be against Tyre	7aβ
2.	Nebuchadrezzar’s attack against Tyre	7aγ–14
a.	King of Kings Nebuchadrezzar and his army	7aγ–7b
b.	Destruction of satellites cities of Tyre	8a
c.	Siege wall, mound, a large shield, Thrust of the battering ram, and swords against Tyre	8b–9
d.	Nebuchadrezzar’s army against the walls of Tyre	10a
e.	Nebuchadrezzar’s entry into Tyre	10b–12
1)	Nebuchadrezzar’s entry into a breached city	10b
2)	The destruction of streets by his army	11a
3)	The death of people and the fall of strong pillars	11b
4)	Plunder of the wealth of Tyre and destruction of walls and houses (third masculine singular into third masculine plural)	12a
5)	Destruction of stones, trees, and dust in the midst of waters	12b
3.	YHWH’s judgment against Tyre	13–14
a.	YHWH Himself will cease songs of Tyre	13
b.	YHWH Himself will make Tyre a bare rock	14aα
c.	The future of Tyre as Spreading nets and No more building of Tyre	14aβ–14aγ
4.	Conclusion formula with the prophetic oracular formula	14b
IV.	Third oracle against Tyre: Dirge by coastlands	15–18
A.	The prophetic messenger formula	15a
B.	Coastlands will tremble at the downfall of Tyre	15b–16
C.	Dirge by coastlands over Tyre	17–18
1.	Dirge by coastlands over Tyre in the future	17aα–17aβ
2.	The Past glory of Tyre (beginning with the Hebrew interjection אֵיךְ “how”)	17aγ–17b
3.	The Present Status of Tyre (beginning with the Hebrew interjection עַתָּה “now”)	18
V.	Fourth oracle against Tyre with mythical elements	19–21
A.	The Hebrew preposition כִּי “for” and the prophetic messenger formula	19aα
B.	Announcement of YHWH’s judgment against Tyre	19aβ–21
1.	YHWH Himself makes Tyre a ruined city	19aγ
2.	The deep (תְּהוֹם) and the great waters (הַיָּם הַגְּדוֹלִים) as YHWH’s agents against Tyre	19b
3.	YHWH will bring Tyre down, those who go down to the pit (the underworld)	20a
4.	No Splendor (כְּבוֹד) in the land of the living	20b

- | | |
|---|------|
| 5. Refrain: Horrors, I will bring about and you shall be no more | 21a |
| 6. YHWH's judgment (you shall be sought but you shall not be found) | 21ba |
| 7. The prophetic oracular formula | 21bβ |

As noted in the overview discussion of Ezek 26:1–28:26, the structure of Ezek 26 is determined by an introductory chronological formula, “and in the eleventh year, on the first day of the month” in Ezek 26:1a. The prophetic word formula “the word of YHWH came to me, saying,” in Ezek 26:1b introduces the following unit. Since the prophetic word formula occurs in Ezek 27:1, Ezek 26 is distinguished from Ezek 27. Most critics agree that Ezek 26 consists of four oracles (26:1–6, 7–14, 15–18, 19–21) because of the prophetic messenger formula (26:3ααβ, 7αα, 15a, 19αα).⁶⁸⁵

However, scholars have wondered whether Ezek 26 reflects a later process of accretion by Ezekiel's disciples. Zimmerli and Eichrodt argue that 26:5b–21 is a so-called “process of expository amplification,” a series of later accretions by one of Ezekiel's disciples.⁶⁸⁶ In contrast, Greenberg, Hals, and Block insist that the four oracles as a literary unity are thematically connected to each other.⁶⁸⁷ As Greenberg analyzes Ezek 26 with a holistic approach, he argues that four oracles can be categorized as A1 (vv. 2–6), A2 (vv. 7–14), B (vv. 15–18), and C (vv. 19–21).⁶⁸⁸ To the brief oracle of A1, Ezekiel himself added a narrative of siege and eradication by king Nebuchadnezzar.⁶⁸⁹ Considering the destruction of Tyre by king Nebuchadnezzar,

⁶⁸⁵ Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), 368–78; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 32; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 116–18; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 541–44; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 33–34; Odell, *Ezekiel*, 333.

⁶⁸⁶ Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 370; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 33.

⁶⁸⁷ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 539–44; Hals, *Ezekiel*, 188; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 33–34.

⁶⁸⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 541–43.

⁶⁸⁹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 544.

Ezekiel also added laments by coastlands (B). This glimpse is developed into the netherworld (C).⁶⁹⁰ In a similar vein, Hals argues that “the picking up of phrases from vv. 3–5 in vv. 8a, 12, and 14 is more a matter of stereotypical language than expository clarification.”⁶⁹¹ Block also insists that recurrent words such as “sword”, “to kill”, “to dwell” provide “a unifying thread.”⁶⁹² In particular, Block argues that “the use of the first person and the emphasis on the role of YHWH in sections A (vv. 1–6) and D (vv. 19–21) creates a theological framework within which the prophet observes the demise of Tyre.”⁶⁹³

I agree with Greenberg, Hals, and Block’s holistic approach to Ezek 26. In my opinion, three rhetorical literary devices connect the oracles together. First, the prophetic utterance formula, *נְאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה* “utterance of my LORD, YHWH,” in Ezek 26:5aγ, 14b, and 21bβ connects the four oracles together: Introduction (26:1–6), Nebuchadrezzar’s attack against Tyre (7–14), and a dirge by coastlands with YHWH’s mythical judgment against Tyre (15–21). Ezek 26:1–5aγ functions as an introduction concerning YHWH’s judgment against Tyre through nations. Ezekiel added his short judgment against satellites cities of Tyre in Ezek 26:5b–6a and concluded with the recognition formula. Since previous oracles against four nations in Ezek 25, Ezekiel introduces “because (*יַעַן*) PN (nation) did something, therefore (*לָכֵן*), I will do...,” pattern and YHWH’s recognition formula *יָדְעוּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה* “they shall know that I am YHWH,” he also follows this sequence. More specifically, Ezek 26:7–14 describes the process from the nations’ attack against Tyre to king Nebuchadrezzar’s attack against Tyre. In particular, Ezekiel

⁶⁹⁰ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 545.

⁶⁹¹ Hals, *Ezekiel*, 188.

⁶⁹² Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 33.

⁶⁹³ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 33.

intentionally introduces two Hebrew words to connect vv. 7–14 with the previous introduction: the Hebrew word “a bare rock” (v. 4, v. 14) and the Hebrew word “spreading place of nets” (v. 5, v. 14). The last subunit concerning a dirge by coastlands with YHWH’s mythical judgment against Tyre (15–21) indicates the dirge by coastlands will be realized by YHWH’s mythical elements such as the Hebrew word תְּהוֹם “the deep” and the Hebrew word הַיָּם הַרְבִּים “the great waters.” Second, the Hebrew particle conjunction כִּי “for” in v. 7aα and v. 19 aα connects each oracle with the previous oracle. For example, the first oracle (vv. 1–6) is connected with the second oracle by the Hebrew particle conjunction כִּי “for” in v. 7aα. Likewise, the Hebrew particle conjunction כִּי “for” in v. 19aα in the fourth oracle (vv. 19–21) enables the fourth oracle to connect with the third oracle (vv. 15–18). Finally, as we discussed the function of the refrain in the overview of Ezek 26:1–28:26, the recurrent refrain, בְּלִהְיוֹת אֶתְנֶנְךָ וְאִינֶךָ, “Horrors I will bring about and you shall be no more” at the end of chapter 26, makes chapter 26 as a coherent unity.

5.3.3. Genre

As we discussed above, the presence of the PROPHETIC WORD FORMULA in 26:1b and 27:1 marks this text as a unit. The overall genre of Ezek 26 is PROPHECY CONCERNING A FOREIGN NATION because Ezekiel presents the destruction of Tyre as an act of YHWH that will take place in the immediate future with the recurrence of FOUR MESSENGER FORMULAE (3aαβ, 7aα, 15a, 19aα).⁶⁹⁴ More importantly, as Marvin Sweeney points out, it is noteworthy that the

⁶⁹⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, FOTL 16 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 528.

actual addressee of the form is Israel or Judah rather than the foreign nation or its king.⁶⁹⁵ In a similar vein, Katheryn Pfisterer Darr emphasizes that Ezekiel's actual audience for Tyre is his fellow exiles.⁶⁹⁶ Presumably, Ezekiel's prophecy concerning Tyre would persuade the exiles that their patron deity, YHWH, is not weak, rather he will defeat Tyre who will thus be forced to acknowledge His sovereignty over the world.

The genre of 26:2–6 is a three-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING. THE PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING (*Erweiswort*) was first suggested by Zimmerli. According to the definition of Zimmerli, “all the announcements of coming divine action, where they are couched in the recognition formula, appear in the light of a divine self-evidencing... All Yahweh's action which the prophet proclaims serves as a proof of Yahweh among the nations.”⁶⁹⁷ In the OAN in the book of Ezekiel, the three-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING appears when Ezekiel makes his prophetic announcement of punishment against Israel's closest neighbors (cf. Ezek 25:6–7, 8b–11): (1) The motivation, introduced by the Hebrew particle *לְכֵן* “because,” (2) the prophetic announcement of punishment, introduced by the Hebrew particle *לָכֵן* “therefore,” and (3) the recognition formula.⁶⁹⁸ First, in Ezek 26:2, Ben Adam tells us that Ezekiel clarifies the reason for the prophetic announcement of punishment: “because (*לְכֵן*) Tyre said concerning Jerusalem, “Aha! Door(s) of the peoples was broken, she was turned to me. I shall be filled! She was laid in ruins.” Just as Ezekiel delivers the reason for the prophetic announcement of punishment against the Ammonites who cried out “Aha” over YHWH's sanctuary in Ezek 25:3a, Ezekiel denounces the

⁶⁹⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 528.

⁶⁹⁶ Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1356.

⁶⁹⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 38.

⁶⁹⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 38.

attitude of Tyre in Ezek 26:2. Second, by introducing the Hebrew particle לָכֵן “therefore,” in Ezek 26:3aαβ, Ezekiel announces YHWH’s judgment against Tyre by nations in 26:3aγ–6. Lastly, the recognition formula appears in v. 6b.

The RECOGNITION FORMULA⁶⁹⁹ in the Tyrian oracles (Ezek 26:1–28:19) occurs only in Ezek 26:6b. By introducing the RECOGNITION FORMULA in the Tyrian oracles (Ezek 26:1–6), Ezekiel emphasizes that through YHWH’s judgment against Tyre, nations will come to know YHWH. In his book, *I AM YAHWEH*, Zimmerli comprehensively analyzes the function of the RECOGNITION FORMULA.⁷⁰⁰ Zimmerli argues that Ezekiel who was influenced by the Priestly Writing introduces the RECOGNITION FORMULA as a liturgical procedure.⁷⁰¹ Zimmerli finds the origin of the RECOGNITION FORMULA in the formula of divine self-introduction in the oracles given to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon: “I am Ishtar of Arbela, O Esarhaddon king of Assyria...I am your great protector...I have not abandoned you. I have given you confidence, I shall not let you be disgraced.”⁷⁰² As we discussed in chapter four, the Assyrian royal ideology influenced Ezekiel’s oracles. When we consider the emphasis of divine kingship in the book of Ezekiel in the OAN, by introducing the RECOGNITION FORMULA, Ezekiel attempts to highlight YHWH’s kingship. For Zimmerli, the RECOGNITION FORMULA in the book of Ezekiel tells us that “Yahweh apparently reveals himself in his actions as the Lord who intervenes on behalf of his people and

⁶⁹⁹ The RECOGNITION FORMULA occurs seventy two times in the book of Ezekiel: 5:13; 6:7, 13, 14; 7:4, 9, 27; 11:10, 12; 12:15, 16, 20; 13:9, 14, 21, 23; 14:8; 15:7; 16:62; 17:21, 24; 20:12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44; 21:10; 22:16, 22; 23:49; 24:24, 27; 25:7, 9, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:22, 23, 24, 26; 29:6, 9, 16, 21; 30:8, 19, 25, 26; 32:15; 33:29; 34:27, 30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:11, 23, 36, 38; 37:6, 13, 14, 28; 38:23; 39:6, 22, 28. See also John T. Strong, “Ezekiel’s Use of the Recognition Formula in His Oracles Against the Nations,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 22 (1995): 118, note 11.

⁷⁰⁰ Walther Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, ed. Walter Brueggemann, trans. Douglas W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982).

⁷⁰¹ Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 7–13.

⁷⁰² Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 15. The content of Esarhaddon’s oracle is quoted by Zimmerli’s book.

historically proves his loyalty to Israel.”⁷⁰³ Building upon Zimmerli’s argument, John T. Strong also argues that “Ezekiel’s use of the recognition formula in his oracles against the nations is fully nationalistic and does not envision the eventual inclusion of the foreign nations in the covenant with Yahweh.”⁷⁰⁴ Strong’s argument is persuasive since Ezekiel’s oracles against nations would be addressed to Ezekiel’s exile community, the house of Israel. He also argues that the RECOGNITION FORMULA in Ezek 26:6b is secondary since the subject of the RECOGNITION FORMULA is plural, not singular.⁷⁰⁵ However, such an argument is unconvincing. As we can see in the oracle against Moab in Ezek 25:11, the subject of the RECOGNITION FORMULA is also plural.

The genre of 26:15–18 is the DIRGE. The Hebrew noun קִינָה “dirge” occurs ten times in the book of Ezekiel (cf. קִינִים feminine plural form in Ezek 2:10).⁷⁰⁶ As we discussed in chapter three, the Sumerian city laments influenced the book of Ezekiel. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp argues that Ezek 26:15–18 includes the city lament features: the use of 3/2 *qînâh* meter and the contrast motif (Tyre’s glorious past is contrasted by the present terror of the city’s destruction) within vv. 17–18.⁷⁰⁷ Then, why does Ezekiel introduce the DIRGE in vv. 15–18? Hedwig Jahnow analyzed the genre of the funeral song in the Hebrew Bible in detail.⁷⁰⁸ Jahnow notes that “Das

⁷⁰³ Zimmerli, *I Am Yahweh*, 92.

⁷⁰⁴ Strong, “Ezekiel’s Use of the Recognition Formula in His Oracles Against the Nations,” 133.

⁷⁰⁵ Strong, “Ezekiel’s Use of the Recognition Formula in His Oracles Against the Nations,” 119.

⁷⁰⁶ The verbal root קִין occurs fourteen times in the book of Ezekiel. See 2:10; 19:1, 14 (twice); 26:17; 27:2, 32 (twice); 28:12; 32:2, 16 (four times).

⁷⁰⁷ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 126–27.

⁷⁰⁸ Hedwig Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied Im Rahmen Der Völkerdichtung*, (Giessen: Verlag von Alfred Töpelmann, 1923).

Leichenlied, das die Fürsten des Meeres der Schwesterstadt singen, ist in Fünfern abgefaßt und zeigt das gebräuchliche Anfangswort 'ēkā.”⁷⁰⁹ In other words, the genre of Ezek 26:15–18 is the DIRGE because it begins with the Hebrew word עָכָה “how.” Jahnow also insists that the contrast between former glory of Tyre and the present tragedy (Der Gegensatz von Eins und Jetzt) in vv. 17–18 proves the dirge.⁷¹⁰ With regard to the *qînâh*, Wesley R. Garr argues that the *qînâh* is a musical composition, “sung by a single person or group of persons appointed to lament the dead.”⁷¹¹ In a similar vein, Sweeney notes that “the dirge was ordinarily performed by hired women or gifted individuals after a death, and it was usually sung in the presence of the corpse as part of the funeral preparations.”⁷¹² Insofar as the DIRGE was sung by hired women or gifted individuals, it is noteworthy that the DIRGE will be sung by all princes of the sea, not by Ezekiel (v. 17).

5.3.4. Setting

Interpreters have tried to unveil the historical setting of Ezek 26. Although the chronological formula in v. 1 indicates the specific year of Ezek 26 “the eleventh year” of king Jehoiahchin’s exile, which means the spring of 587 BCE to the spring of 586 BCE,⁷¹³ it lacks the specification of the month. Since the content of v. 2 explains the fall of Jerusalem in summer 586 BCE, the oracle against Tyre would be announced after the destruction of Jerusalem. However,

⁷⁰⁹ Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, 212.

⁷¹⁰ Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, 212.

⁷¹¹ Wesley R. Garr, “The Qinah: A Study of Poetic Meter, Syntax and Style,” ZAW 95 (1983): 60.

⁷¹² Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 519.

⁷¹³ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 529.

according to the chronological formula, “in the twelfth year of our exile, on the fifth day of the tenth month” (Jan. 8 of 585 BCE) in Ezek 33:21,⁷¹⁴ Ezekiel receives the news about the destruction of Jerusalem from a fugitive. To reconcile this issue, Block assumes that the chronological formula of 26:1 would be “in the twelfth year, in the eleventh month,” which means Feb. 3, 585 BCE.⁷¹⁵ Indeed, the LXX^A (Codex Alexandrinus) renders “the eleventh year” as “the twelfth year.” But as Greenberg and Sweeney point out, 2 Kings 25:2 and Jer 52:5 date Nebuchadrezzar’s capture of Jerusalem without the specific month.⁷¹⁶ Both of them argue that Tyre’s gloating over Jerusalem would be around the time of the beginning of the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem before the fall of Jerusalem, the summer of 586 BCE. H. J. Katzenstein assumes that the date of Nebuchadrezzar’s siege of Tyre is 585 BCE after the fall of Jerusalem.⁷¹⁷ As Katzenstein analyzes Josephus’s statement that “it was in the seventh year of his reign that Nabuchadrezzar began the siege of Tyre” (*Against Apion* 1, section 159), he reads “the seventh year of his reign” as “the seventh year of his (=Ethbaal’s) reign, that is Nebuchadrezzar’s twentieth year.”⁷¹⁸ Thus, Katzenstein argues that “the long siege started in the twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar, i.e., in 585 BCE and came to an end ca. 572 BCE (=Nebuchadrezzar’s thirty-third year).”⁷¹⁹ Indeed, the chronological formula “in the twenty-seventh year, on the first day of the first month” (Ezek 29:17) which means April 26, 571

⁷¹⁴ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 35.

⁷¹⁵ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 35.

⁷¹⁶ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 529; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 133.

⁷¹⁷ H. Jacob Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre, from the Beginning of the Second Millenium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E.* (Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University, 1997).

⁷¹⁸ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 328.

⁷¹⁹ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 329.

BCE,⁷²⁰ reflects Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year siege of Tyre. Katzenstein also relies on two extra biblical sources: Unger's tablet and The Court of Nebuchadnezzar. Unger published a tablet which is an official receipt for provisions "for the king and the soldiers who went with him against the land of Tyre."⁷²¹ The Court of Nebuchadnezzar, which is dated about 570 BCE, points out that among the foreign kings, the king of Tyre listed as number one.⁷²² Thus, Katzenstein assumes that the king of Tyre would be Ethbaal who was deported to Babylon.⁷²³

However, Ezekiel's announcement of judgment against Tyre in Ezek 26, which reflects Nebuchadnezzar's thirteen-year siege of Tyre from 585 to 572 BCE, was historically unfulfilled. In Ezek 29:17–21, Ezekiel specified that Nebuchadnezzar's army labored to take Tyre but eventually failed. Thus, in Ezek 29:19, Ezekiel announces that Nebuchadnezzar will carry off the wealth and booty of Egypt in return for the wages of his army against Tyre. Many commentators agree that Ezekiel himself inserts Ezek 29:17–21 to correct his unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre. Katzenstein insists that "the long siege has come to its end, but that there was no capitulation of Tyre."⁷²⁴ He assumes that the siege of Tyre was actually "a blockade of the island," although Ezek 26: 6–8 depicts that Nebuchadnezzar's army occupied the Tyrian mainland.⁷²⁵ Rather, Alexander the Great successfully conquered Tyre in 332 BCE. Maria Eugenia Aubet notes that the accounts in Arrian reported that "some 8,000 defenders fell during the siege by Alexander the

⁷²⁰ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 614.

⁷²¹ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 324.

⁷²² Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 326.

⁷²³ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 331.

⁷²⁴ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 331.

⁷²⁵ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 331.

Great and another 30,000 survivors, including women and children, were made slaves by the Macedonians.”⁷²⁶

For this reason, more recently, Markus Saur argues that the siege and downfall of Tyre in Ezek 26:7–14 seems to look back to the campaign of Alexander the Great who brought after 333 BCE the Near East under his control.⁷²⁷ He explains how Alexander the Great conquered the city Tyre in two phases in 332 BCE: “the building of the dam, with which Alexander sought to attach the island to the coast, and the naval campaign that Alexander prepared by organizing a fleet in which even the other Phoenician cities took part.”⁷²⁸ With regard to the description of v. 8b, since the Hebrew word *ḥayṭ* “siege wall” serves as “a siege ramp that had to be secured with a shield(*ḥayṭ*),” he argues that it is related to the construction of a dam, shielding the dam builders from the arrows of the Tyrian bowmen.⁷²⁹ For Saur, Alexander the Great destroyed “pillars of your strength,” which refer to “the pillars of the Melqart temple.”⁷³⁰ Thus, he argues that Ezek 26:7-14 reflects a later expansion of the text in the Hellenistic period, which understood Ezekiel’s prophecy of Tyre’s downfall to be fulfilled.⁷³¹ In other words, to explain Ezekiel’s unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre in Ezek 29:17-21, Ezekiel’s disciples added Nebuchadrezzar’s attack in detail, which is actually about the successful defeat of Tyre by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

⁷²⁶ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 35.

⁷²⁷ Markus Saur, “Ezekiel 26-28 and the History of Tyre,” *SJOT* 24 (2010): 208–21.

⁷²⁸ Saur, “Ezekiel 26-28,” 211.

⁷²⁹ Saur, “Ezekiel 26-28,” 212.

⁷³⁰ Saur, “Ezekiel 26-28,” 213.

⁷³¹ Saur, “Ezekiel 26-28,” 213.

However, Zimmerli asserts that “the infiltration of characteristics typical of a description of a mainland siege into the description of the siege can already be observed in the Assyrian royal inscriptions, when Esarhaddon there reports of the construction of trenches against Tyre.”⁷³² Greenberg also agrees with Zimmerli’s argument. Greenberg argues that all Assyrian siege scenes describe the body length shields (𐎶𐎶𐎶) of v. 8b.⁷³³ Furthermore, he insists that the predicted description of the destruction of Tyre resembles the account of Sidon’s destruction in 677 by Esarhaddon.⁷³⁴ More importantly, Zimmerli, Greenberg, Odell, and Launderville have doubted the epithet of Nebuchadrezzar, “king of kings (*šar šarrāni*)” in 7a.⁷³⁵ Nebuchadrezzar never used the epithet “king of kings” in his inscriptions. Rather, the epithet had been used by Assyrian kings such as Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal since the thirteenth century BCE.⁷³⁶ Zimmerli argues that “the epithet was used only as a title of Marduk, but then plays a considerable role in the Persian empire and its successor states.”⁷³⁷ Perhaps, as we discussed in chapter four, the epithet “king of kings” for Nebuchadrezzar reflects the possibility that Ezekiel was influenced by the Assyrian royal ideology. Indeed, Tyre was conquered by the Assyrian kings before the siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. Esarhaddon in 671 BCE and Ashurbanipal in 663 or 662 BCE respectively conquered Tyre because the king of Tyre, Ba’alu or Baal I allied with the Assyrian kings’ primary enemy, Egypt. In 671 BCE, when Esarhaddon

⁷³² Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 37.

⁷³³ Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 533.

⁷³⁴ Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 535.

⁷³⁵ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 35–36; Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 532; Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 43; Odell, *Ezekiel*, 336–37; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 149.

⁷³⁶ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 337.

⁷³⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 36.

resolved to attempt the conquest of Egypt, “Ba’alu, king of Tyre, trusted in his friend Taharqo, king of Cush, the yoke of Ashur threw off, and made defiance.”⁷³⁸ In a damaged alabaster tablet discovered at Ashur, king Esarhaddon claims his conquest of Tyre in detail as follows:

I conquered Tyre, which is *in the midst of the sea*, (and) took away all of the cities (and) possessions of Ba’alu, its king, who had trusted in Taharqa, king of Kush; (and) I conquered (Lower) Egypt, Upper Egypt, and Kush, struck Taharqa, its king, five times with arrows, and ruled his entire land (lines 6–9a).⁷³⁹

Just as Ezekiel often portrays the location of Tyre as “in the midst of the sea” (26:5, 12, 27:32), Esarhaddon also describes Tyre as located “in the midst of the sea.” The son of Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal also conquered Tyre in 663 or 662 BCE. because Ba’alu again rebelled against its suzerain, Assyria. When Ashurbanipal attacked Tyre in his third expedition after his two campaigns to Egypt,⁷⁴⁰ his destruction of Tyre resembles the description of Ezek 26:7–14.

Edward Lipiński translates Ashurbanipal’s expedition as follows:

Redoubts round him I raised, and over his people I strengthened the watch. On sea and land I seized his roads; his going out I stopped. I let scarce water and food, to preserve their lives, reach their mouths. By a strong blockade, which removed not, I besieged them. The daughter proceeding from his body and the daughters of his brothers, for concubines he brought to my presence. Yahi-milki (^m*Ia-ḥi-mil-ki*), his son, who had not crossed the sea, at once he sent forward, to make obeisance to me. His daughter and the

⁷³⁸ Edward Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age: Historical and Topographical Researches* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 192.

⁷³⁹ Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 135.

⁷⁴⁰ Lipiński, *Skirts of Canaan*, 194.

daughters of his brothers with the great dowries, I received. Mercy I granted him, and the son proceeding from his body I returned to him.⁷⁴¹

Lipiński notes that after the attack of Tyre in 663 or 663 BCE, Ashurbanipal did not deprive Ba'alū of the throne, but annexed the mainland territories of Tyre. For what purpose did Ezekiel appropriate the siege works of Assyrian kings for the description of king Nebuchadnezzar's attack against Tyre? Why did he choose Tyre as his ultimate enemy? These questions will be answered in the next intention section.

5.3.5. Intention

Ezekiel's oracles against Tyre (26:1–28:19) are more lengthy and exclusive than other prophetic oracles against Tyre: Isa 23:1–18, Jer 47:4, Hos 9:13, Joel 3:4, Amos 1:9–10, and Zechariah 9:2–3. Most oracles against Tyre criticize its pride and commercialism. However, except Isa 23:1–18, the contents of other oracles against Tyre are relatively short. As John T. Strong points out, most materials against Tyre seem to be written in the postexilic period, except Isa 23:1–18, Jer 47:4, and Hos 9:13.⁷⁴² In the case of Isa 23:1–18, its setting reflects the pre-exilic period. According to Marvin A. Sweeney, although the final form of Isaiah 23 is set in the fifth century edition of the book of Isaiah, there is a clear distinction between a major disaster against Phoenicia, Sidon, and Tyre (vv. 1b–14) and the anticipation of the restoration of Tyre (vv. 15–18).⁷⁴³ Rather than presenting an exclusive oracle against Tyre, the setting of vv. 1b–14

⁷⁴¹ Lipiński, *Skirts of Canaan*, 194.

⁷⁴² Strong, "Great King," 179–80.

⁷⁴³ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 307.

reflects Phoenicia's capitulation to Sennacherib in 701 BCE.⁷⁴⁴ On the other hand, vv. 15–18 portrays the restoration of Tyre after seventy years, which symbolizes the lifetime of one king. Sweeney argues that the setting of vv. 15–18 is related to the decline of the power of the Neo-Assyrian Empire after the death of Ashurbanipal in 627 BCE, which corresponds to approximately seventy years following Phoenicia's capitulation to Sennacherib, 631 BCE, the eighth year of the reign of Josiah.⁷⁴⁵ In the case of Jer 47:4, Jeremiah focuses generally on the Philistines rather than the oracle of Tyre. Hos 9:13 compares Ephraim to Tyre rather than the oracle against Tyre per se. Thus, it is important to examine why Ezekiel addresses his critical oracles against Tyre in the exilic period.

Building upon Walther Zimmerli's argument, most commentators argue that Ezekiel announces the three lengthy oracles against Tyre (Ezek 26:1–28:19) because the primary obstacles of Babylon are Tyre and Egypt.⁷⁴⁶ Zimmerli argues that Ezekiel follows Jeremiah's message that "Yahweh has given his people over to judgment and has appointed the Babylonian power as the instrument of that judgment."⁷⁴⁷ For this reason, Ezekiel not only omits the oracle against Babylon, but also announces YHWH's judgment on the two powers Egypt and Tyre who were in a state of rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE.⁷⁴⁸ With regard to the use of Tyrian traditions, Zimmerli relied on Mazar's supposition that "possibly a geographical proximity of those departed from Judah to groups of exile from Tyre may have contributed to the

⁷⁴⁴ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 307.

⁷⁴⁵ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39*, 309.

⁷⁴⁶ Carol A. Newsom, "A Maker of Metaphors: Ezekiel's Oracles against Tyre," *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 154; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 4; Darr, "Ezekiel," 1362.

⁷⁴⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 24.

⁷⁴⁸ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 24.

particularly specific formulation of the oracles against Tyre.”⁷⁴⁹ From a historical approach to Tyre, H. J. Katzenstein argues that Nebuchadnezzar invaded Tyre in order to block his primary enemy Egypt, which often allied with Tyre.⁷⁵⁰ Since Nebuchadnezzar’s political aim was the supremacy of the Levant, he needed to acquire Tyre in order to block the influence of the Egyptian king Hophra (589–570 BCE).⁷⁵¹ Katzenstein introduces the strategy of Nebuchadnezzar’s attack against Tyre as follows:

We believe, however, that Nebuchadnezzar’s attack on Tyre was not caused by Tyre itself or even by a hostile movement on the part of Ethbaal III. Tyre’s good relations with Egypt coupled with Nebuchadnezzar’s demand that all the Phoenician town-states become Babylonian satellites, was the cause of this conflict. The reasons for the Babylonian king’s demand were quite obvious: to have a free flank, and perhaps even a fleet and a base for his ultimate aim: to make Egypt submissive to Babylon. For Pharaoh Hophra had ‘perfidiously’ broken the silent agreement between Babylon and Egypt not to interfere in western Asia. The length of the siege of Tyre actually saved Egypt and gave it a respite of many years till the real Babylonian invasion would take place.⁷⁵²

Scholars have also considered that Ezekiel’s enmity against Tyre is involved in Tyre’s political and economic relationship with Jerusalem. Joseph Blenkinsopp argues that Tyre’s failure to assist Judah during the destruction of Jerusalem brought about Ezekiel’s resentment, because the Judean king Zedekiah plotted rebellion with Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon against Babylon in 595/594 BCE (Jer 27:3).⁷⁵³ John T. Strong further developed this political conflict

⁷⁴⁹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 24.

⁷⁵⁰ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 295–347.

⁷⁵¹ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 329.

⁷⁵² Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 329–30.

⁷⁵³ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 117.

with Tyre from the perspective of Ezekiel's Zion theology.⁷⁵⁴ For Strong, the strategy that Tyre appears to have remained neutral at the time of Babylon's siege of Jerusalem would present "Tyre as secure, inviolable, and thereby attractive as the location of the throne of the Great King during a time when the Jerusalem temple lay in ruins."⁷⁵⁵ To put it another way, since Tyre's invincibility could present Tyre as a theological alternative to Zion, Ezekiel announces the lengthy oracles against Tyre for a second generation exilic audience.⁷⁵⁶ With regard to economic factors, Moshe Greenberg and Marvin A. Sweeney argue that Tyre was a commercial rival of Jerusalem.⁷⁵⁷ In 26:2a, Ezekiel describes Tyre's gloating over the downfall of Jerusalem: "Door(s) of the peoples was broken, she was turned to me." Sweeney argues that the Hebrew word is literally *דלתות* "gateways," which indicate the role of Jerusalem in controlling inland trade routes.⁷⁵⁸ Similarly, Moshe Greenberg asserts that "in the reigns of the Judahite kings of the mid-eighth to the seventh centuries an upsurge in the population of Jerusalem and its economic vitality occurred that might account for the prophet's conception of the city as a trade center."⁷⁵⁹ In particular, Martin Alonso Corral calls attention to Tyre's economic activities. Corral renders the Hebrew word *דלתות* "gateways" as "the Philistine ports," which were previously the natural outlet for import and export of products and commodities.⁷⁶⁰ Thus, Corral

⁷⁵⁴ Strong, "Great King," 181–85.

⁷⁵⁵ Strong, "Great King," 194.

⁷⁵⁶ Strong, "Great King," 194. See also John T. Strong, "Tyre's Isolationist Policies in the Early Sixth Century BCE: Evidence from the Prophets," *VT* 47 (1997): 217.

⁷⁵⁷ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 133; Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 530.

⁷⁵⁸ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 133.

⁷⁵⁹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 530.

⁷⁶⁰ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles Against Tyre*, 143–44, 175.

insists that Tyre's gloating over Jerusalem reflects Tyre's anticipation of a major trade shift to the North, to Tyre itself after the fall of Jerusalem.⁷⁶¹

Despite scholarly efforts toward understanding Ezekiel's oracles against Tyre, they have difficulty interpreting Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre.⁷⁶² As we discussed in a previous section, Ezek 29:17–21 indicates that Ezekiel himself corrects his unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre. Perhaps, Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre enabled readers to seek its meaning more than its political and economic status in the ancient Near East. In her article, *A Maker of Metaphors: Ezekiel's Oracles Against Tyre*, Carol A. Newsom argues that "metaphor derives much of its convincing power because it does not allow its hearers to be passive but requires them to participate in the construction of the metaphorical meaning."⁷⁶³ Newsom observes that Ezekiel intentionally chose the metaphor for Tyre. Indeed, the very name Tyre (צור) also means the Hebrew noun "rock (צור)."⁷⁶⁴ The city of Tyre, which is now called Şûr, was the center of world trade situated forty kilometers south of Sidon and about forty five kilometers north of Akko.⁷⁶⁵ Phoenician mythology tells that Tyre was founded upon two floating rocks joined by the roots of a holy olive tree.⁷⁶⁶ According to Tyrian sources, Hiram I

⁷⁶¹ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles Against Tyre*, 175.

⁷⁶² Freedman and Geoghegan argue that "unfulfilled prophecy is most likely to be the genuine words of Ezekiel." See David N. Freedman and Jeffrey C. Geoghegan, "Martin Noth: Retrospect and Prospect," in *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*, ed. Steven L. McKenzie and Patrick Graham, JSOTSup 182 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 147; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 147–49; Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 215–18.

⁷⁶³ Newsom, "A Maker of Metaphors," 153.

⁷⁶⁴ BDB, 849, 862.

⁷⁶⁵ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 9.

⁷⁶⁶ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 9; Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 33.

joined the smaller island with the larger.⁷⁶⁷ When we consider such images of Tyre as the symbol of invincibility, the failure of Babylon to capture Tyre in Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy (Ezek 29:17–21) must have accentuated the weakness of king Nebuchadnezzar for the readers.

In this section, I argue that Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire through his unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre (Ezek 26:7–14; 29:17–21). By appropriating mythological elements as hidden transcripts for his exile community in Ezek 26:19–21, Ezekiel highlights YHWH's supremacy over Marduk. In other words, the Neo-Babylonian Empire failed to conquer Tyre on the historical level (Ezek 26:7–14; 29:17–21), whereas YHWH as divine king defeated Tyre on the metahistorical level (Ezek 26:19–21). This section first examines how Ezekiel describes the image of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in Ezek 26:7–14 and 29:17–21 from the postcolonial perspective. Lastly, it also examines how Ezekiel highlights YHWH's supremacy over Marduk, the patron deity of the Neo-Babylonian Empire through the mythological elements such as the deep, the great waters, the descent to the nether world.

By evoking the Assyrian kings' successful capture of Tyre in Ezek 26:7–14, Ezekiel obliquely criticizes Nebuchadnezzar who failed to conquer the city Tyre, while Ezekiel presents Nebuchadnezzar's stereotypical siege works against Tyre as public transcripts. As we discussed in the setting section, Ezekiel intentionally designates Nebuchadnezzar as “king of kings (*šar šarrāni*),” which had been used of Assyrian kings since the thirteenth century BCE and was frequently used of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal in the seventh century BCE. When Ezekiel's audiences in exile read Ezek 26:7–14 or heard it read, those who knew the Assyrian epithet evoke the Assyrian kings' successful capture of Tyre (Esarhaddon in 671 BCE and Ashurbanipal

⁷⁶⁷ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 9; Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 33.

in 663 or 662 BCE) through the use of the epithet “king of kings” for Nebuchadnezzar.

Furthermore, as Greenberg points out, the predicted destruction of Tyre in v. 12 resembles the account of Sidon’s destruction in 677 BCE by Esarhaddon as follows:

(As for) Abdi-Milkūti, king of Sidon, (who) did not fear my lordship (and) did not listen to the words of my lips, who trusted in the rolling sea and threw off the yoke of the god Aššur — I leveled Sidon, his stronghold, which is situated in the midst of the sea, like a flood, tore out its wall(s) and its dwelling(s), and threw (them) into the sea; and I (even) made the site where it stood disappear. Abdi-Milkūti, its king, in the face of my weapons, fled into the midst of the sea. By the command of the god Aššur, my lord, I caught him like a fish from the midst of the sea and cut off his head. I carried off his wife, his sons, his daughters, (Lines ii 65–75).⁷⁶⁸

James C. Scott argues that the dominant elites intentionally designed the public transcript “to be impressive, to affirm and naturalize” their power.⁷⁶⁹ The description of siege works in the Assyrian royal inscription functions as public transcript for the subjugated. Ezekiel who knew such public transcript in the Assyrian royal inscriptions must have been equally expressive of king Nebuchadnezzar’s attack on Tyre (26:7–14). However, Ezekiel also introduces the counter image of king Nebuchadnezzar’s army as the hidden transcripts in 29:18:

Ben Adam, king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder laid bare

And there was no wage to him and to his army from Tyre concerning the labor that he worked against it.

⁷⁶⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 535; Leichty, *Royal Inscriptions of Esarhaddon*, 16.

⁷⁶⁹ Scott, *Domination*, 45.

In Scott’s terminology, this is a developed hidden transcript as “cooked” rather than “raw” forms of the bold declaration of the hidden transcript.⁷⁷⁰ Scott also introduces the concept of “world-upside-down imagery.” In response to “a dominant transcript of hierarchy and deference,” subjugated people produce world-upside-down prints as the counterculture.⁷⁷¹ When we compare Ezek 26:7 with Ezek 29:18, it is observed that Ezekiel attempts to use “world-upside-down imagery” as follows:

Ezek 26:7aγ–7b	Ezek 29:18a
Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon from the north, <i>king of kings</i> With horse and chariot, and horsemen, and with <i>a great assembly of troops</i> .	Ben Adam, <i>king</i> Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyre; <i>every head was made bald and every shoulder is laid bare</i>

While Ezekiel hyperbolically expresses the image of Nebuchadrezzar and his army in Ezek 26:7aγ–7b, he gives a straightforward account of their image in Ezek 29:18a. In Ezek 26:7aγ–7b, Ezekiel tactfully disguise his intentions. However, by producing “world-upside-down imagery” in Ezek 29:18a, Ezekiel obliquely emphasizes the incompetence of Nebuchadrezzar and his army. Through the description of siege works against Tyre in Ezek 26:7–14, Ezekiel surreptitiously narrates that while king of kings Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal successfully conquered the city Tyre, Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, failed to capture it.

⁷⁷⁰ Scott, *Domination*, 216; Horsley, *Oral Performance*, 22.

⁷⁷¹ Scott, *Domination*, 172.

Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy in the two account lies in the ambiguity of the hidden transcripts of resistant action in the colonial context.⁷⁷² Homi Bhabha notes that "the stereotype, as the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both colonizer and colonized, is the scene of a similar fantasy and defense."⁷⁷³ By producing stereotypes, the colonizers emphasize that they are superior to the colonized. However, they also confront the ambivalence of the colonized, which threaten their colonial authority. Ezekiel learned the stereotypes of Assyrian royal ideology: the epithet of "king of kings (*šar šarrāni*)" and Assyrian kings' successful attack against Tyre. Just as Assyrian kings, king of kings, successfully conquered the city Tyre, Ezekiel so imitates their description for king Nebuchadrezzar's attack against Tyre. This is Ezekiel's mimicry. In Bhabha's terminology, "mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance."⁷⁷⁴ Although the colonized exaggeratedly copy language, culture, manners, and ideas of the colonizers, their exaggeration reflects a form of mockery.⁷⁷⁵ Ezekiel's mimicry of Assyrian traditions for king Nebuchadrezzar's attack against Tyre (Ezek 26:7–14) becomes his mockery against his army (Ezek 29:18a).

If Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy against Tyre connotes his hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, how can we understand the role of YHWH? Does it mean that the failure of Nebuchadrezzar's conquer of Tyre indicates YHWH's failure? Walther Eichrodt notes Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy as follows:

⁷⁷² Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 117.

⁷⁷³ Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 107.

⁷⁷⁴ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 128.

⁷⁷⁵ Huddart, *Bhabha*, 39.

The predictions of the prophets, on the other hand, are always associated with that to which the prophets testify, direct awareness of the whole control of providence, so they subordinate each single historical event to its context in the activity of God which makes the whole development of history serve his kingdom. Their limitation consists in the fact that they are trying to show the way along which God is leading, whereas that God is always transcendent and far above all human capabilities, and so his march through history cannot be imprisoned in human words. He carries his plans home and attains his objective with all the freedom of the Creator.⁷⁷⁶

Here, Eichrodt argues that Ezekiel's prophecy presents YHWH's transcendence. He also asserts that "Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy demands humble obedience to the mystery of the divine work of realization."⁷⁷⁷ Nevertheless, as we discussed in the setting, some scholars argue that since Ezek 26:7–14 portrays the capture of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, Ezekiel's prophecy has not failed. To verify their argument, David Thompson suggests that the new subject in the plural form of v. 12 of the MT indicates later conquerors such as Alexander and the Saracens.⁷⁷⁸ He observes that since the LXX reads the subject in the singular form, the LXX reads the entirety of vv. 7–14 as an exposition involving only Nebuchadnezzar and his forces.⁷⁷⁹ By contrast, Thomas Renz argues that "while vv. 8–11 speak about a military-tactical action, v. 12 relates to the common practice among victorious combatants of plundering cities or settlements as 'remuneration' for their efforts and therefore properly switches to the plural."⁷⁸⁰ Renz further

⁷⁷⁶ Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 410–11.

⁷⁷⁷ Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 411.

⁷⁷⁸ David L. Thompson, "A Problem of Unfulfilled Prophecy in Ezekiel: The Destruction of Tyre (Ezekiel 26:1-14 and 29:18-20)," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 16 (1981): 98.

⁷⁷⁹ Thompson, "Problem of Unfulfilled Prophecy," 98.

⁷⁸⁰ Thomas Renz, "Proclaiming the Future: History and Theology in Prophecies against Tyre," *TynBul* 51 (2000): 49.

insists that the focus of Ezekiel's prophecy is not on the ability to present a precise outline of the future but on the proclamation of God's purpose.⁷⁸¹ However, since their analysis relied too much on the historical accounts of Tyre, they ignored how YHWH fulfilled his oracles against Tyre through mythical elements.

Over the past few decades, some scholars have argued that mythological motifs of a cosmological type in the Tyrian oracles heighten YHWH's supremacy over other gods.⁷⁸² As H. J. van Dijk analyzes Ezek 26–28 with the help of Ugaritic and Semitic studies, he avers that Ezekiel draws heavily upon classical mythology.⁷⁸³ Likewise, Bernard F. Batto calls attention to Ezekiel's mythopoeic process or mythmaking process, with the implication that “Yahweh's battle against the chaos monster was being played out dramatically in the exiles' own experience.”⁷⁸⁴ Especially, Batto's structural analysis of the role of the OAN in the book of Ezekiel is valuable, although he did not analyze the Tyrian oracles. He asserts that oracles against the nations in Ezek 25–32 are intentionally parallel to the oracles against Gog of Magog

⁷⁸¹ Renz, “Proclaiming the Future,” 55.

⁷⁸² H. J. van Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre (Ez. 26, 1-28, 19): A New Approach*, Biblica et Orientalia 20 (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1968); Lawrence Boadt, *Ezekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980); Boadt, “Rhetorical Strategies in Ezekiel's Oracles of Judgment,” in *Ezekiel and His Book: Textual and Literary Criticism and Their Interrelation* (ed. Johan Lust; BETL 74; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 211–31; Christoph Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang: “Schöpfung” in Mythos Und Ritual Im Alten Orient Und in Griechenland Am Beispiel Der Odyssee Und Des Ezechielbuches* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 78–118; Bernard F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1992), 153–67; Odell, *Ezekiel*, 2005, 344; John B. Geyer, *Mythology and Lament: Studies in the Oracles About the Nations*, SOTSMS (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 3–15, 39–74; Carly L. Crouch, “Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare,” *JBL* 130 (2011): 473–92; Marvin A. Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books: Form, Intertextuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-Biblical Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 203–18; Carly L. Crouch and Casey A. Strine, “YHWH's Battle against Chaos in Ezekiel: The Transformation of Judahite Mythology for a New Situation,” *JBL* 132 (2013): 883–903.

⁷⁸³ Dijk, *Ezekiel's Prophecy on Tyre*, 11.

⁷⁸⁴ Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 154.

in Ezek 38–39.⁷⁸⁵ According to Batto’s analysis, “the former precede and lead into the restoration of the historical Israel in chapters 34–37; the latter precede and lead into the advent of the eschatological era (chs. 40–48).”⁷⁸⁶ Thus, he insists that while the OAN represents the destruction of the hostile earthly powers who opposed the establishment of the people of God, the oracles against Gog of Magog represents the metahistorical power of evil.⁷⁸⁷ Building upon Batto’s argument, Lawrence E. Boadt also argues that “the strong use of mythological language when identifying the enemy as a king of foreign nations, whether he be the king of Tyre, the pharaoh, or Gog of Magog, further suggests that Ezekiel’s purpose in organizing the book as a whole involves establishing a counter myth for Israel.”⁷⁸⁸ In his book, *Mythology and Lament*, John B. Geyer calls attention to the *Sitz im Leben* of ON–IJE (Oracles about the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel).⁷⁸⁹ He argues that “ON–IJE was closely connected with the royal court and had a role to play in the temple.”⁷⁹⁰ He further asserts that ON–IJE influenced by Sumerian city laments is related to temple liturgy.⁷⁹¹ For Geyer, since temple is a microcosm of the cosmos, the *Chaoskampf* myths were celebrated in the temple and there the kingship of YHWH is manifested as he purifies the temple.⁷⁹² Similarly, in contrast to Block’s argument that Ezekiel’s oracle is an example of demythologization, Odell insists that mythological images in

⁷⁸⁵ Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 157.

⁷⁸⁶ Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 157.

⁷⁸⁷ Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 158.

⁷⁸⁸ Boadt, “Rhetorical Strategies,” 229.

⁷⁸⁹ Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 4.

⁷⁹⁰ Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 4.

⁷⁹¹ Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 179–80.

⁷⁹² Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 179–80.

the Tyrian oracles are an example of Ezekiel's remythologization.⁷⁹³ More recently, in her article on "Ezekiel's Oracles against the Nations in Light of a Royal Ideology of Warfare", Crouch argues that "Ezekiel's use of cosmological mythological motifs in his oracles against the nations was directly related to the theological threat to Yahweh's status that was posed by the military defeat of Judah."⁷⁹⁴ She suggests that mythological images in Ezekiel 26 evoke the *Chaokampf*.⁷⁹⁵ Of particular importance is her analysis of mythological images in Ezekiel 26: "Like the net, the flood is one of Marduk's characteristic weapons, and Assyrian royal inscriptions frequently refer to the effects of kings' conquests using the net in terms alluding to this, employing phrases such as 'laid waste as though ruined by the flood' (*kīma til abubi*), phraseology reminiscent of the description of Tyre as a naked rock."⁷⁹⁶ However, although Crouch's analysis sheds light on the role of mythological texts in the OAN of the book of Ezekiel, she did not explain the relationship between the historical account (26:7–14) and the metahistorical account (26:8–21).

In my view, the Neo-Babylonian Empire failed to conquer Tyre on the historical level (26:7–14), whereas YHWH as divine king realizes his plan on the metahistorical level (26:19–21). This hypothesis is suggested by Joseph Blenkinsopp and Dean Ulrich.⁷⁹⁷ Blenkinsopp argues that the fall of Tyre in the historical account (7:14) is given broader significance by

⁷⁹³ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 340.

⁷⁹⁴ Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles," 492.

⁷⁹⁵ Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles," 485.

⁷⁹⁶ Crouch, "Ezekiel's Oracles," 485.

⁷⁹⁷ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*; Dean R. Ulrich, "Dissonant Prophecy in Ezekiel 26 and 29," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10 (2000): 121–41.

transposition into the idiom of mythology.⁷⁹⁸ For Blenkinsopp, although Ezekiel's oracle against Tyre is unfulfilled in Ezek 29:17–21, “prediction *in itself* was not of the essence of prophecy.”⁷⁹⁹ He further insists that although Ezekiel's oracle against Tyre seems to end, “the account of the deluge as an undoing of creation suggests that order is always under threat from disorder.”⁸⁰⁰ Building upon Blenkinsopp's suggestion, Ulrich argues that the referent in Ezek 26:7–14 is not only the purely historical account of king Nebuchadnezzar's army but “Ezek 26:19–21 should be read as part of a larger phenomenon: Ezekiel's heightening of human pride to a cosmic plane.”⁸⁰¹ He notes as follows:

Ezek 26:19–21 places vv. 7–14 in a larger context, which demands both a historical and a suprahistorical fulfillment. One must recognize that chap. 26 never expected Nebuchadnezzar to mete out the full judgment on Tyre. As a mere human, Nebuchadnezzar could not have enacted the cosmic aspects of YHWH's sentence. This realization affects the interpretation of the so-called corrective prophecy in 29:17–21.⁸⁰²

At the metahistorical level (26:19–21), through mythological images, Ezekiel intentionally heightens YHWH's supremacy over Marduk. Nebuchadnezzar and his army proceeded with their attack against Tyre on the historical level in vv. 7–14. Although the text indicates that YHWH Himself brings Nebuchadnezzar to attack Tyre in v. 7a, it is a kind of public transcript for the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Presumably, during the period of the siege of Tyre from 585 to 572 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar and his army believed that their patron deity

⁷⁹⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 117.

⁷⁹⁹ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 116.

⁸⁰⁰ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 118.

⁸⁰¹ Ulrich, “Dissonant Prophecy,” 135, 137.

⁸⁰² Ulrich, “Dissonant Prophecy,” 138.

Marduk protected them. However, Nebuchadrezzar's army failed to capture the city Tyre in 29:17–21. It connotes the weakness of Marduk. On the other hand, in the metahistorical level in 26:19–21, Ezekiel intentionally uses mythological elements to destroy Tyre. Especially, in v. 19b, Ezekiel notes YHWH's defeat of Tyre with mythological elements: "When (I) bring you⁸⁰³ *the deep* and *the great waters* will cover you." Odell argues that "the use of the term *těhôm* without a definite article suggests that Ezekiel was referring to the primeval waters of the deep."⁸⁰⁴ Indeed, "Deep" as the great cosmic waters is attested in cosmological traditions in the Hebrew Bible.⁸⁰⁵ In Gen 1:2, the Hebrew word תְּהוֹם "deep" is paired with heaven. Mark S. Smith insists that "this pair is attested as divinities of cosmic origins in earlier West Semitic tradition (as known from the Ugaritic texts), where the word, "Deep" (*thm*) is paired with Heaven."⁸⁰⁶ According to the Ugaritic Baal-cycle, Prince Baal defeats Yamm, the god of the sea, with the weapons, which Kothar fashions (KTU 1.2 IV lines 11–27).⁸⁰⁷ Smith also compares "Deep" with Tiamat in the *Enuma Elish*.⁸⁰⁸ In the Epic of Creation, Tiamat as the cosmic waters conspires to kill her new born gods in an attempt to revenge the murder of her mate, Apsu. After the divine counsel of the younger gods, they chose the storm god Marduk for the battle against Tiamat. In the battle, Marduk spreads his net and pierces Tiamat's belly with his arrow. In the end, Marduk cuts her carcass into two parts to create heaven and earth (*Enuma Elish* IV lines 1–

⁸⁰³ The LXX adds suffix first common singular. The Vulgate renders it as "and I will bring."

⁸⁰⁴ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 340.

⁸⁰⁵ Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 59.

⁸⁰⁶ Smith, *Priestly Vision of Genesis*, 59.

⁸⁰⁷ Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2*, vol. 1, VTSup 55 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 322–23.

⁸⁰⁸ Smith, *Priestly Vision of Genesis*, 18.

146).⁸⁰⁹ With regard to the Hebrew word הַרְבֵּי מַיִם “many waters,” Herbert G. May argues that “Yahweh makes the many waters, the deep, his agent of destruction, as he did at the time of the flood.”⁸¹⁰ More broadly, Sweeney considers the function of the sea in the Tyrian oracle. He argues that “the sea functions both as a source of life or creation in the world as well as a threat to the life and creation that stems from it.”⁸¹¹ Of particular importance is Sweeney’s analysis of “Tyre’s descent into the Pit” (26:20, cf. Dirge over Egypt in 32:17–21). According to Inanna’s Descent into the Netherworld (Sumerian version of Ishtar’s Descent to the Netherworld, cf. 8:14), Inanna descends to the Netherworld to meet her sister Ereshkigal, queen of the netherworld. Inanna’s absence from the land leads to the loss of produce in her city. In the netherworld, *galla*-demons asked Inanna for a substitute to replace her. When Inanna arises from the netherworld to look for a substitute, she chooses her husband due to her sense of jealousy. Thus, Dumuzi not only must go to the Netherworld for six months but was allowed to return to the earth for the half of the year. When Dumuzi returned from the Netherworld, the rains returned.⁸¹² Sweeney observes that “the usual mythological pattern of overcoming death is absent in Ezek 26.”⁸¹³ Nebuchadrezzar could not make Tyre descend into the Pit or the Netherworld with the support of Marduk. By contrast, YHWH not only brings Tyre down into

⁸⁰⁹ For a translation of the *Enuma Elish*, see Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 18; ANET 60, 66-69, 514; James B. Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 28–36; Wilfred G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 87–95.

⁸¹⁰ Herbert G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of Mayim Rabbim, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74 (1955): 18.

⁸¹¹ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 210.

⁸¹² Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 160; Foster, *Before the Muses*, 402–9.

⁸¹³ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 212.

the Pit, but also prohibits Tyre from returning to the earth. This highlights that YHWH is the source of Tyre's demise.⁸¹⁴

This is evidently Ezekiel's rhetoric of resistance against the Neo-Babylonian Empire's propaganda. From a postcolonial perspective, Hugh S. Pyper takes account of the function of the OAN as resistance against imperial powers. As Pyper analyzes John Geyer's argument that the OAN uses mythological traditions, he argues that those traditions are also used in Assyrian and Babylonian royal propaganda.⁸¹⁵ For Pyper, by appropriating mythical and cultic elements, drawn from the oppressors' own ideology, the OAN serves to maintain "the group which experiences a continued political oppression and lack of political and military options to change its status."⁸¹⁶ Thus, he correctly argues that "the reuse of metaphors and linguistic elements in the OAN have their origin in the cult of Marduk."⁸¹⁷ As we discussed above, Ezekiel's mythopoeic texts reuse mythical and cultic elements of Marduk in the Enuma Elish. Bhabha's ideas help us to understand why Ezekiel reuses mythological elements in the Enuma Elish. Ezekiel is a mimic who reveals his hybridity: a Zadokite priest who was acculturated into Babylonian society.⁸¹⁸ Ezekiel imitates the culture of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which is

⁸¹⁴ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 212.

⁸¹⁵ Pyper, "Postcolonialism and Propaganda," 148.

⁸¹⁶ Pyper, "Postcolonialism and Propaganda," 153.

⁸¹⁷ Pyper, "Postcolonialism and Propaganda," 154.

⁸¹⁸ Vanderhooft evaluated several acculturation strategies that appear in Ezekiel. He argues that "while the prophet may not reflect self-consciously on the particular mechanisms of Babylonian imperial rule, he did adopt significant elements of the Babylonian cultural repertoire for the purpose not of criticizing the dominant culture, but for criticizing his own Judean community." Although I disagree with his argument, his social scientific research on the phenomenon of acculturation in Ezekiel is valuable. See David S. Vanderhooft, "Ezekiel in and on Babylon," in *Bible et Proche-Orient: Mélanges André Lemaire*, ed. J. M. Durand and J. Elayi, Transeuphratène 46 (Paris: Gabalda, 2014), 99–119.

“mimicry —*almost the same but not quite*.”⁸¹⁹ On the surface, Ezekiel’s mimicry seems not to be resistant to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. However, as Bhabha emphasizes, it menaces “the narcissistic demand of colonial authority.”⁸²⁰ Ultimately, Ezekiel’s mythopoeic speculation designed to encourage his audiences, his exile community that YHWH as divine king as creator is superior to Marduk.⁸²¹

5.4. The Dirge over Tyre, the Beautiful Ship (Ezek 27:1–36)

5.4.1. Translation and Critical notes

¹ the word of YHWH came to me, saying,

² and you, *Ben Adam*, raise against Tyre, a dirge.

³ And you shall say to Tyre,

the one who dwells at the entrance of the sea, the merchant of the peoples on many coastlands

Thus says the LORD⁸²² YHWH

O Tyre! You, you said. *I*⁸²³ *am perfect in beauty*⁸²⁴

⁸¹⁹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 127.

⁸²⁰ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 126.

⁸²¹ Although Casey A. Strine and Carly L. Crouch did not analyze the book of Ezekiel from a postcolonial perspective, I agree with their argument that by using mythological texts in the *Chaoskampf*, Ezekiel highlights YHWH’s divine kingship. See Casey A. Strine and Carly L. Crouch, “YHWH’s Battle against Chaos in Ezekiel: The Transformation of Judahite Mythology for a New Situation,” *JBL* 132 (2013): 883–903.

⁸²² LXX omits the LORD.

⁸²³ The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading תִּנִּיף “Ship.” (cf. Ezek 16:14; 27:3; 28:12). Zimmerli also translates v. 3bβ as “O Tyre, you are a ship of perfect beauty.” He follows Wellhausen’s supposition that “behind the תִּנִּיף there could be concealed the meaning “ship.”” See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 42. However, as Darr

⁴ *in the heart of the seas*, your borders

Your builders have perfected your *beauty*.

⁵ With cypress trees from Senir, they built for you, all planks⁸²⁵

Cedar from Lebanon, they took to make a mast upon you.⁸²⁶

⁶ oaks from Bashan, they made oars

Deck. They made with ivory,⁸²⁷ of cypresses⁸²⁸

from the coastlands of Kittim.

⁷ embroidered linen from Egypt was your spread

*To be a sign for you*⁸²⁹

Blue and purple⁸³⁰ from coastlands of Elishah⁸³¹ was your covering.

⁸ Inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your rowers

points out, Ezekiel introduces metaphorical parables without identifying underlying referents at the outset. See Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1373.

⁸²⁴ The Hebrew word יָפִי “beauty” occurs ten times in the book of Ezekiel (cf. Ezek 16:14, 15, 25; 27:3, 4, 11; 28:7, 12, 17; 31:8).

⁸²⁵ Targum adds the second feminine singular suffix and renders this part as “your planks.”

⁸²⁶ The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading “for you.”

⁸²⁷ The BHS critical apparatus the Hebrew noun יָשָׁן “ivory” reflects the dittograph of the previous verb עָשׂוּ “they made.” Leslie C. Allen also argues that “ivory” should be omitted because of the chiasmus in v. 6. See Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, WBC 29 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 81.

⁸²⁸ It can be literally translated as “daughter of Ashurim (or Assyrians).” According to the Masorah parva, it is a hapax legomenon. Its meaning is uncertain. Targum reads it as the Hebrew word תַּאֲשׁוּר “boxtree.”

⁸²⁹ The BHS critical apparatus deletes this whole part. Zimmerli regards it as a gloss. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 44.

⁸³⁰ The Vatican copy of the LXX deletes “purple.”

⁸³¹ The Hebrew noun אֵלִישָׁה “Elisha” occurs three times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 10:4; 1Chr 1:7; Ezek 27:7).

Your skilled men,⁸³² O Tyre, were within you

They were sailors.

⁹ Elders⁸³³ of Gebal and her skilled men were within you

Making strengthening your fissure

All ships of the sea and their mariners were within you

To trade your wares

¹⁰ Persia (Paras)⁸³⁴ and Lud and Put. They were in your army, your fighting men⁸³⁵

They hung shield and helmet in you. They, they gave⁸³⁶ you your splendor.

¹¹ Sons of Arvad and your army on your walls all around⁸³⁷ and men of Gammad⁸³⁸ were at your towers

They hung quivers upon your walls surrounding. They *perfected in your beauty*.

¹² *Tarshish*⁸³⁹ was trading with you because of the abundance of all wealth

In silver,⁸⁴⁰ with iron, tin, and lead, they furnished as your wares.⁸⁴¹

⁸³² LXX reads it as καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντές σου “and your princes.” The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading עֲמָלִים עֲמָלִים “skilled workers of wool.”

⁸³³ The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading it as singular noun.

⁸³⁴ The Hebrew noun פָּרַס means Persia. But Zimmerli and Block translate it as “Paras” because it is a later expansion, which means the period of Persian Empire in the middle of the sixth century. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 60; Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 64. Contra their argument, Greenberg reads it as “Persia” because “Persia came into the purview of Assyria as early as the ninth century BCE, long before its imperial rise.” See Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 551–52.

⁸³⁵ The BHS critical apparatus deletes this part.

⁸³⁶ Syrian and Vulgate versions delete “they gave.”

⁸³⁷ LXX and Syriac versions delete “all around.”

⁸³⁸ According to Masorah parva, it is a hapax legomenon. The LXX reads it as “guardians.” Its geographical location is uncertain.

⁸³⁹ LXX reads it as Καρχηδόνιοι “the Carthaginians.”

¹³ Javan (Greece), Tubal,⁸⁴² and Meshech. They are trading with you

With human beings and utensils of bronze they exchange for your merchandise.

¹⁴ From Beth-togarmah

Horses and horsemen, and mules.⁸⁴³ They exchanged for your wares⁸⁴⁴

¹⁵ Sons of Dedan (Rhodes)⁸⁴⁵ were your merchants. Many coastlands are merchandise of your hand

Ivory tusks and ebony they brought for your gift.

¹⁶ Aram⁸⁴⁶ is trading with you because of your many products⁸⁴⁷

With⁸⁴⁸ turquoise, purple⁸⁴⁹ and embroidered work and byssus (fine linen) and corals and ruby, they furnished for⁸⁵⁰ your wares.

¹⁷ Judah and the land of Israel.⁸⁵¹ They were your merchants

⁸⁴⁰ LXX and Syriac versions read it as ισχύος σου ἀργύριον “your strength, silver.”

⁸⁴¹ The BHS critical apparatus adds the Hebrew preposition כ “with.”

⁸⁴² Many manuscripts, the LXX, and Syriac add the Hebrew conjunction ו “and.”

⁸⁴³ LXX omits “mules.”

⁸⁴⁴ The BHS critical apparatus suggests the Hebrew preposition כ “with.” Cf. Vulgate.

⁸⁴⁵ LXX renders it as Ῥοδίων “Rhodes.”

⁸⁴⁶ Many manuscripts, Aquila, and Syriac versions read it as “Edom.” Cf. LXX reads it as ἀνθρώπους “men.”

⁸⁴⁷ LXX reads it as τοῦ συμμίκτου σου “your merchandise.”

⁸⁴⁸ LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate omit the Hebrew preposition כ “with.”

⁸⁴⁹ LXX omits “purple.”

⁸⁵⁰ Some manuscripts and the LXX omits the Hebrew preposition כ “with.”

⁸⁵¹ LXX reads it as καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ “and sons of Israel.”

Wheat of Minnith and Pannag⁸⁵² and honey and oil and balm. They furnished for⁸⁵³ your merchandise.

¹⁸ Damascus traded with you because of your great works,⁸⁵⁴ because of the abundance of all wealth⁸⁵⁵

With wine of Helbon⁸⁵⁶ and wool of reddish-gray⁸⁵⁷

¹⁹ And Vedan⁸⁵⁸ and Javan⁸⁵⁹ from Uzal⁸⁶⁰ traded for your wares

Wrought⁸⁶¹ iron, cassia and calamus. It was for your merchandise.

²⁰ Dedan was your merchant in saddlecloths for riding.

²¹ Arabia and all princes of Kedar. They were traders of your hand

With lambs and rams and goats. In these they trade with you.

²² The merchants of Sheba and Raamah. They were your merchants

With all finest spice(s)⁸⁶² and with all precious stone(s)⁸⁶³ and gold, they furnished for your wares.

⁸⁵² Hapax legomenon.

⁸⁵³ The BHS critical apparatus recommends adding the Hebrew preposition כ “with”; cf. LXX, Targum, and Vulgate.

⁸⁵⁴ LXX omits this part.

⁸⁵⁵ LXX reads it as δυνάμεώς σου “your power.” Cf. Syriac.

⁸⁵⁶ Hapax legomenon.

⁸⁵⁷ BDB, 850.

⁸⁵⁸ LXX omits “Vedan.”

⁸⁵⁹ LXX reads it as καὶ οἶνον “and wine.”

⁸⁶⁰ Many manuscripts, Aquila, and Syriac vocalize מְאִזַּל as מְאִזָּל; LXX reads it as ἐξ Ἀσηλ “out of Asel.”

⁸⁶¹ Hapax legomenon

⁸⁶² LXX and Syriac versions omit this part.

²³ Haran, Canneh, and Eden.⁸⁶⁴ The merchants⁸⁶⁵ of Sheba⁸⁶⁶

Assyrian and Chilmad⁸⁶⁷ traded with you.

²⁴ They were your merchants in gorgeous garments⁸⁶⁸ in cloaks⁸⁶⁹ of blue and embroidered stuff and chests of variegated cloths⁸⁷⁰

Bound with cords and solidly⁸⁷¹ made in your market-place⁸⁷²

²⁵ Ships of Tarshish were your travelers⁸⁷³ in your trade

and you were full and heavily laden *in the heart of the seas*.

²⁶ Your rowers brought you into the mighty waters

The east wind wrecked you in the heart of the seas.

²⁷ Your wealth, your wards, your merchandise. Your mariners and your sailors

Those who make strengthen your fissure (repairers of your fissure) and merchants of your merchandise and all the fighting men who were with you and with⁸⁷⁴ all your assembly who was among you shall go down *in the heart of the seas* on the day of your downfall.

⁸⁶³ LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate versions omit כל “all.”

⁸⁶⁴ LXX omits Eden but adds οὗτοι “these”

⁸⁶⁵ LXX and Vulgate versions add suffix as follows: ἔμποροί σου “your merchants.”

⁸⁶⁶ LXX omits “Sheba.”

⁸⁶⁷ Syriac omits “Chilmad.” The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading וְכָל־מֶדֶי “and all of Medes.”

⁸⁶⁸ LXX omits “garments.”

⁸⁶⁹ Hapax legomenon.

⁸⁷⁰ Hapax legomenon.

⁸⁷¹ Hapax legomenon.

⁸⁷² Hapax legomenon. LXX omits this part. The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading “with them your merchant.” or “with them your merchants.” Cf. the Vulgate.

⁸⁷³ LXX read this word as ἔμποροί σου “your merchants.”

²⁸ At the outcry of your sailors

The countryside⁸⁷⁵ shall quake.

²⁹ and all those who handle the oar shall come down from their ships⁸⁷⁶

Mariners and all⁸⁷⁷ the sailors of the sea

They shall stand on the ground.

³⁰ and they shall raise their voices over you and cry bitterly.

and they shall bring dust on their heads. With ashes they shall roll about in mourning.

³¹ and they will make themselves a baldness for you and shall gird with sackcloth

and they shall weep over you, in bitterness of themselves, bitter mourning.⁸⁷⁸

³² and their sons shall raise a dirge over you and⁸⁷⁹ shall lament for you

Who was like Tyre, like the destroyed (or silenced)⁸⁸⁰ in *the midst of the sea*?

³³ When your wares went out from the seas, you satisfied many peoples

Your wealth and your merchandise. You enriched kings of the earth.

³⁴ Time (or now)⁸⁸¹ when you are wrecked by the seas,⁸⁸² in the depths of the waters

⁸⁷⁴ Many manuscripts omit the Hebrew preposition ׀ “with.”

⁸⁷⁵ Hapax legomenon. LXX reads it as φόβη “fear.” Aquila reads it as οἱ ἀπὸθεν “those who are afar.” Theodotion translation reads it as αἱ πατριαὶ “family of.” The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading הַקָּרְשִׁים “the boards.”

⁸⁷⁶ Leningrad manuscript and many manuscripts vocalize it as “לָ.”

⁸⁷⁷ LXX adds the conjunction καὶ “and.”

⁸⁷⁸ LXX omits v. 31.

⁸⁷⁹ Many manuscripts add “their sons.”

⁸⁸⁰ LXX read it as “silenced.”

⁸⁸¹ LXX, Targum, and Vulgate versions read it as νῦν “now”

Your merchandise and all your assembly sank in the midst of you.⁸⁸³

³⁵ All the inhabitants of the coastlands are appalled⁸⁸⁴ over you

And their kings shudder with horror. Their faces⁸⁸⁵ are convulsed.⁸⁸⁶

³⁶ The merchants among the peoples hissed at you

You have become come to a *horrible end and you shall be no more* again forever

5.4.2. Structure

I.	Ezekiel's account of YHWH's instructions	27:1–3a
A.	Prophetic word formula	1
B.	YHWH's instruction	2–3b α
1.	Ezekiel's dirge over Tyre	2
2.	Speak to Tyre	3a
II.	Dirge over Tyre as a ship (Past)	3b–36
A.	Tyre as a ship: Past Glory	3b–11
1.	Prophetic messenger formula	3b α ¹⁻⁴
2.	Tyre's self-description as a ship: I am perfect in beauty	3b α ⁵⁻¹⁰
3.	Tyre's builders who perfected its beauty in the heart of the sea	4–7
a.	Tyre's builders	4
b.	The materials of a ship	5–7
	: Planks, oars, deck, sail, and awning	
c.	Crews of a ship	8–9a
	: Rowers from Sidon and Arvad, Sailors from Tyre, and Caulkers from Gebal	
d.	All ships of the sea and their mariners at Tyre	9b
4.	Military men for a ship who perfected Tyre's beauty	10–11
III.	Tyre's trading partners for its power and wealth (Past)	12–25a
A.	The list of Tyre's imports	12–24
1.	Tarshish: silver, iron, tin, and lead	12
2.	Java, Tubal, and Meshech: Slaves and Utensils of bronze	13

⁸⁸² LXX reads it as ἐν θαλάσσει “in the sea.” Cf. Targum

⁸⁸³ LXX reads it as πάντες οἱ κωπηλάται σου “all your rowers.”

⁸⁸⁴ The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading מְלִיץ “they were humiliated.”

⁸⁸⁵ LXX reads it as τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτῶν “his face.”

⁸⁸⁶ LXX reads it as καὶ ἐδάκρυσεν reads it as “and wept.”

3. Beth-togarmah: horses, horsemen, and mules	14
4. Sons of Dedan: ivory tusks and ebony	15
5. Aram: turquoise, purple, byssus, corals, and ruby	16
6. Judah and the land of Israel: wheat, honey, and oil	17
7. Damascus: wine of Helbon and wool of reddish-gray	18
8. Uzal: iron, cassia, and calamus	19
9. Dedan: saddlecloths	20
10. Arabia and Kedar: lambs, rams, and goats	21
11. Sheba and Raamah: finest spices, precious stones, and gold	22
12. Haran, Canneh, Eden, Assyrian, and Chilmad: gorgeous garments	23–24
B. Ships of Tarshish as Tyre’s travelers	25a
IV. Tyre’s present disaster	25b–36
A. Dirge over Tyre as a ship	25b–27
1. Tyre as a ship fully loaded in the heart of the seas	25b
2. Brought into the mighty waters by Tyre’s rowers	26a
3. Tyre’s shipwreck by the east wind in the heart of the seas	26b
4. The downfall of Tyre’s power and wealth in the heart of the seas	27
B. Mourning for the wrecked Tyre	28–36
1. Acts of mourning	28–31
a. Introduction: the outcry of sailors	28
b. All rowers, mariners, and the sailors on the ground	29
c. Raising their voice and crying bitterly	30
d. Dust on their heads and with ashes rolling about in mourning	31
2. Dirge over Tyre by their sons	32–36
a. Dirge over Tyre by their sons	32a
b. Who was like Tyre in the midst of the sea?	32b
c. Tyre’s past glory	33
d. Tyre’s present disaster: shipwreck by the seas	34
e. Shuddering of the coastlands and their kings with horror	35–36a
f. Refrain: A horrible end and you shall be no more	36b

Ezekiel’s second oracular account concerning Tyre as a ship in Ezek 27:1–36 is demarcated initially by the prophetic word formula “the word of YHWH came to me, saying,” in v.1, which introduces the entire unit.⁸⁸⁷ As we discussed above, the refrain “A horrible end and you shall be no more” in v. 36b indicates Ezekiel’s second oracle against Tyre (cf. first oracle refrain in Ezek 26:21a and third oracle in 28:19b). In contrast to the short dirge by coastlands in Ezek 26:17–18, the entire chapter introduces the dirge by Ezekiel himself, except a dirge over

⁸⁸⁷ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 135.

Tyre by sons of sailors (vv. 32–36a). It is noteworthy that the typical style of dirge over Tyre by sons of sailors in 27:32–36a resembles the dirge by coastlands in Ezek 26:17–18.⁸⁸⁸ Despite its present cohesion as a unity and its genre as a dirge, scholars have considered later additions by Ezekiel’s disciples in Ezek 27. Zimmerli argues that the rhythm of vv.9b–11 is different from the typical *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern in vv. 3b⁵⁻¹⁰–9a.⁸⁸⁹ Moreover, as his previous scholars point out, Zimmerli considers that Ezekiel’s disciples inserted a list of Tyre’s trading partners in vv. 12–24 as pure prose, which lacks the *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern in the dirge form.⁸⁹⁰

However, Ezek 27 consists of two major sections (vv. 3b–25a, vv. 25b–36), which are connected thematically to one another. Building upon Greenberg’s holistic approach to Ezek 27, Block and Darr argue that Ezek 27 has a clear then-now sequence, which follows the scheme of dirges: Tyre’s glorious past (vv. 3–25) and Tyre’s tragic present (vv. 26–36).⁸⁹¹ Indeed, as Jahnow points out, the contrast between former glory and and present disaster is characteristic of a communal funeral dirge.⁸⁹² The communal funeral dirge is generally used for the death of individuals. However, by contrasting, Tyre’s glorious past with its present disaster, Ezekiel applies the funeral dirge for individuals to Tyre as a ship throughout chapter 27. Of particular importance is the repetition of key terms and phrases in Ezek 27. Nancy R. Bowen notes as follows:

⁸⁸⁸ Block argues that Ezek 27:32b-36 represents an expansion of the brief dirge found in 26:18-29. See Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 51.

⁸⁸⁹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 53.

⁸⁹⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 53–55.

⁸⁹¹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 564–65; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 51; Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1371.

⁸⁹² Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, 212.

While many view these verses (vv. 12–25) as a later insertion, the repetition of key terms and phrases connects them to the other subunits: “heart of the seas” (vv. 4, 25, 26, 27); “gave, exchanged” (*nātan*; vv. 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 22); “barter, wares, merchandise, trade” (*‘ārāb, ma ‘ārāb*; vv. 9, 13, 17, 19, 25, 27, 33, 34); “merchant, trade” (*rākal*; vv. 3, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24); “wares” (*‘zzēbôn*; vv. 12, 14, 16, 19, 22, 27, 33); “wealth, riches” (*hôn*; vv. 12, 18, 27, 33); “do business, traded, dealers, merchants” (*sāḥar*; vv. 12, 16, 18, 21, 36).⁸⁹³

After YHWH’s instructions concerning a dirge over Tyre in vv. 1–3a, the prophetic messenger formula “thus says the LORD YHWH” in v. 3b α^{1-4} introduces four subsections: A (vv. 3b α^{1-4} –11), A’ (vv.12–25a), B (vv. 25b–27), and B’ (vv. 28–36). The first subsection (vv. 3b α^{1-4} –11) introduces the past glory of Tyre as a ship. This section is demarcated by an *inclusio*, since it opens with “I am perfected in beauty” in v. 3b α^{5-10} , and closes with military men “perfected in your beauty” in v. 11.⁸⁹⁴ It begins with the prophetic messenger formula in v. 3b α^{1-4} and introduces Tyre’s pride with the second feminine singular form, “O Tyre! You said. ‘I am perfect in beauty’” in v. 3b α^{5-10} . Within vv. 3b α^{1-4} and 3b α^{5-10} , it is observed with an *inclusio* as well: A (I am perfected in beauty), B (in the heart of the seas), and A’ (your builders perfected your beauty). It describes how Tyre as a ship achieved its beauty by builders. Although it does not begin with the Hebrew particle interjection כֵּן “how,” it follows the *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern, except v. 9b–11. Verses 5–11 employ third person common plural verbal forms (בָּנוּ “they built,” לָקְחוּ “they took,” עָשׂוּ “they made,” הָיוּ “they became,” תָּלוּ “they hung,” נָתְנוּ “they gave,” and כִּלְלוּ “they perfected”), except v. 7. By contrast, verse 7 employs the third person masculine singular. Verses 5–7 describe materials for a beautiful ship: Planks, oars, deck, sail, and awning.

⁸⁹³ Nancy R. Bowen, *Ezekiel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 165.

⁸⁹⁴ Allen, Greenberg and Block also consider the rhetorical characteristics of Ezek 27. They suggest that the phrase “perfected in beauty” in v. 3b and v. 11b constitutes an *inclusio*. See Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 83–85; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 564–65; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 51–52.

Verses 8–9a portray Phoenician rowers, skilled sailors, and caulkers, who properly handled the ship. Although v. 9b does not follow the *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern, it summarizes all ships of the seas and mariners in vv. 5–9a. Verses 10–11 describe mercenaries who perfected Tyre’s beauty.

The second subsection (vv.12–25a) also portrays the past glory of Tyre with imports from Tyre’s trading partners, while its form changes the dirge form to lengthy prose. This section is demarcated by an *inclusio*, because of Tarshish, which refers to the city of Tartessos in southwestern Spain⁸⁹⁵ in v. 12 and v. 25a.⁸⁹⁶ While Tarshish furnishes precious metals toward to Tyre in v. 12, its ships became Tyre’s merchant ships in v. 25a. This section portrays raw materials from Tyre’s trading partners in detail: from the outermost zone of Tyre (Tarshish, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, Beth-togarmah, and the Rhodians or sons of Dedan; vv. 12–15) to the inner places most adjacent to Tyre (Aram or Edom, Judah and the land of Israel, and Damascus; vv. 16–18); to the southeast of Tyre (Dedan, Kedar, Raamah, and Sheba⁸⁹⁷; vv. 19–22); and to the Far East, Mesopotamia (Haran, Canneh, Eden, and Assur; vv. 23–25a). It is noteworthy that many *hapax legomena*⁸⁹⁸ occur in the second section. It reflects Ezekiel’s ingenious information concerning Tyre’s economic resources in the ancient Near East. Furthermore, in the center of the

⁸⁹⁵ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 137.

⁸⁹⁶ Greenberg also argues that vv. 12-25a constructs an *inclusio* because of “Tarshish.” See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 565.

⁸⁹⁷ Hals insists the location of Sheba is uncertain. But based upon the Table of Nations in Gen 10, Greenberg and Sweeney argue that “Sheba is located either in Ethiopia or Arabia (Gen 10:7).” See Hals, *Ezekiel*, 193–94; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 567, 569; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 137. On the other hand, Mario Liverani argues that Sheba is located in Upper Mesopotamia and Sheba in v.22 is possibly to be deleted. See Mario Liverani, “The Trade Network of Tyre According to Ezek 27,” in *Ah, Assyria ... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim Tadmor*, ed. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph‘al (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 69–70.

⁸⁹⁸ Frederick E. Greenspahn defines *hapax legomena* as follows: “Several factors enter into the decision as to which words are *hapax legomena*: the corpus from which they must come, that part of the corpus’ vocabulary to be checked for words appearing once, and the criteria defining “one-ness” which are applied to that vocabulary.” See Frederick E. Greenspahn, *Hapax Legomena in Biblical Hebrew: A Study of the Phenomenon and Its Treatment since Antiquity with Special Reference to Verbal Forms* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1984), 17.

trading list, the report of Judah and the land of Israel in v. 17 is located. I will explain its function in the intention section.

The third subsection (vv. 25b–27) resumes the dirge over Tyre as a ship. Verses 25b–26 follow the *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern. The miniature dirge in vv. 25b–26 is also demarcated by an *inclusio*, because of the repetition of בְּלֵב יָמִים “in the heart of the seas” in 25b and 26b respectively. Such a structure highlights the shipwreck of Tyre by the east wind (v. 26bα). Verse 27 functions as a summary of the downfall of Tyre’s builders and wealth, which echoes Tyre’s builders and wealth in previous sections.⁸⁹⁹

The fourth and final subsection (vv. 28–36) portrays the sailors’ dirge over Tyre. It is observed that verses 28–32a follow the *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern. Verse 28–32a informs the performance of mourning rituals by the sailors of the sea: 1) raising their voice and crying bitterly, 2) dust on their heads; and 3) rolling about in mourning with ashes. Verses 32b–36 present a dirge form, which indicates the contrast between Tyre’s former glory (vv. 32b–33) and its present disaster (34–36a). Although v. 34 of the MT begins with the Hebrew noun עַתָּה “time” instead of the Hebrew particle adverb עַתָּה “now” (cf. the dirge of 26:18 which begins with עַתָּה), LXX, Targum, and Vulgate versions read it as the Hebrew adverb particle עַתָּה “now.” Block argues that the Hebrew noun עַתָּה “time” of v. 34 reflects a defective spelling of the Hebrew adverb particle עַתָּה “now.”⁹⁰⁰ Verse 36b concludes with the refrain “Horrors and you shall be no more again forever,” which is shorter than 26:21.

⁸⁹⁹ Allen also emphasizes the role of v. 27, which echoes the terms used for crew and cargo in vv 8–10 and 12–22 respectively. Thus, he argues that it accentuates the loss of Tyre’s former assets. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 84.

⁹⁰⁰ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 83.

5.4.3. Genre

The overall genre of this passage is a DIRGE. As we discussed above, two major sections indicate the contrast between the past glory ('Once') and the present disaster ('Now') as one of the characteristics in the DIRGE: Tyre's glorious past (vv. 3–25) and Tyre's present disaster (vv. 26–36). Two major sections also include small DIRGES: vv. 3b⁵⁻¹⁰-4, vv. 25b–27, and vv. 32b–36a. DIRGES of Ezek 27 generally do not always follow the *qînâh* 3/2 beat pattern. For this reason, Zimmerli attempts to reconstruct a pair of five-stress lines in Ezek 27.⁹⁰¹ Furthermore, in contrast to the DIRGE by coastlands in Ezek 26:17, DIRGES of Ezek 27 do not begin with the Hebrew interjection particle *'êk* "how." In this regard, DIRGES of Ezek 27 are similar to a DIRGE over the princes of Israel of Ezek 19. First, the DIRGE over the princes of Israel of Ezek 19 does not begin with the Hebrew interjection particle *'êk* "how."⁹⁰² Second, just as DIRGES of Ezek 27 create an extended metaphor of Tyre as a ship, the DIRGE of Ezek 19 introduces metaphors such as the lioness, her cubs and the vine to sing a dirge over the princes of Israel. More specifically, Jahnow argues that the style of the great DIRGE in Ezek 27:32b–36 is quite similar to the DIRGE in Ezek 19.⁹⁰³ With regard to the use of a DIRGE in Ezek 19, Block notes as follows:

In reality, ch 19 is best interpreted as a parody, which according to the definition of the Greek term, *παρωδός*, is "singing a song in a different style, burlesquing a song." This is precisely what Ezekiel has done here. He has taken the form of a *qînâ* and infused it with alien content. The incongruity between form and substance produces a parody's rhetorical force. By utilizing some of the features of a dirge, the prophet creates a somber

⁹⁰¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 54.

⁹⁰² Block argues that "in place of the customary opening exclamation, *'êk/ 'êkâ*, Ezekiel begins with a question, *mâ 'immêkâ*, "What is your mother?" See Block, *Ezekiel* 1-24, 594.

⁹⁰³ Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, 216.

and melancholic atmosphere, and raises a certain anticipation in his hearers. However, the tension between form and substance, *qînâ* and story, song and fable, challenges the hearers to reflect more deeply on the meaning of the poem.⁹⁰⁴

Similarly, irregular forms and rhythms with a lengthy prose (vv. 12–25a) within DIRGES of Ezek 27 also challenge the audiences to reconsider the meaning of the metaphor, Tyre as a sinking ship in the midst of the seas. For this reason, although F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp analyzes the genre of Ezek 27:1–11 and 26–36 as city lament features, he notes that “while present, city-lament features are not very prevalent, because imagery derived from the basic metaphor of Tyre as a great ship dominates the lament.”⁹⁰⁵

5.4.4. Setting

It is difficult to assume the exact date of Ezek 27 because of the absence of the chronological formula. Unlike the previous chapter, there is no information about the historical event by Nebuchadnezzar and his army against Tyre.⁹⁰⁶ Moreover, in contrast to Ezek 26:2, Ezek 27 does not include information relating to the fall of Jerusalem.⁹⁰⁷ Rather, Ezekiel describes Judah and the land of Israel as having furnished Tyre with agricultural products in v. 17. Daniel

⁹⁰⁴ Block, *Ezekiel 1-24*, 594–95.

⁹⁰⁵ Dobbs-Allsopp, *Weep, O Daughter of Zion*, 127. More recently, building upon Dobbs-Allsopp’s analysis, Reed Lessing argues that “Ezekiel 27 is a city-lament that speaks of a *future* fall of Tyre while placing the prophecy in terms of a *past* event.” See Robert R. Lessing, “Satire in Isaiah’s Tyre Oracle,” *JSOT* 28 (2003): 101.

⁹⁰⁶ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 53.

⁹⁰⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 56; Hals, *Ezekiel*, 194.

I. Block suggests that the historical setting would be a date shortly after the oracle in Ezek 26, “some time in late 587 or early 586,” if the dirge of Ezek 27 is an expansion of 26:17–18.⁹⁰⁸

Moreover, although Ezekiel introduces a list of Tyre’s trading partners as a prose style in detail in vv. 12–25a, scholars have also articulated different opinions about the historical setting of the list. Maria Eugenia Aubet argues that “the list of Ezek 27 would refer to a period before Assyrian domination over Judah, Israel and Damascus, perhaps corresponding to the period of Ithobaal’s reign and so to the period of the greatest expansion of Tyre’s trade in the east, during the ninth to eighth centuries BCE.”⁹⁰⁹ Indeed, as Ethbaal or Ithobaal I (887–856 BCE), who called himself “king of the Sidonians,” established his dominion over all the southern territory of Phoenicia, he expanded his territory into the continent of Asia.⁹¹⁰ His successors extended Tyre’s continental frontiers during the ninth century.⁹¹¹ The Phoenician cities were able to maintain their commercial power until the middle of the eighth century BCE, because while they paid tributes to the Neo-Assyrian Empire, the Assyrian kings did not invade their cities.⁹¹² For this reason, Aubet further argues that the list of Ezek 27 is not written by Ezekiel himself, but by the anonymous author who transcribed and copied an old poem.⁹¹³ On the other hand, Georg Fohrer argues that the editor of Ezek 27 used a list from an Egyptian trade document, because there is

⁹⁰⁸ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 53.

⁹⁰⁹ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 122.

⁹¹⁰ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 46.

⁹¹¹ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 50.

⁹¹² Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 55.

⁹¹³ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 121.

no mention of Egypt as the great commercial center of the ancient world.⁹¹⁴ Fohrer assumes that the whole list is created during the reign of Amosis III (569–525 BCE), when the Pharaoh finally abandoned the Egyptian conquest plan in Palestine and Syria and laid the ground for the Egyptian sea power on the Mediterranean.⁹¹⁵ For Fohrer, Ezekiel’s list from Syria Palestine trading partners (vv. 16–19a) to the nomadic Arabian tribes (vv. 19b–21) reflects the trading route as a large semicircle for Egypt.⁹¹⁶ In contrast, Mario Liverani argues that “Ezek 27 is highly precise in historical terms and cannot find any adequate setting outside the short season between the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE and the beginning of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar in 585 BCE.”⁹¹⁷ In particular, Liverani considers that the list in Ezek 27 is also related to King Josiah’s attempts to bring all of Palestine under Jerusalem rule. Liverani notes as follows:

During and immediately after the collapse of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, some political space was left to the small states of the Syro-Palestinian belt, before the armies of Egypt from the south and especially of Babylon from the north made it clear that the imperial dimension was a definitive reality. The Judean attempt under Josiah is well known; it was characterized by a nationalistic and religious basis, aimed at bringing all of Palestine under Jerusalem rule. It is quite possible that a similar Tyrian attempt also took place in those same years (until ca. 580 BCE), characterized by a commercial basis, and aimed at taking advantage of the Assyrian collapse in order to widen the trade network toward

⁹¹⁴ Georg Fohrer, *Ezekiel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1955), 158. Zimmerli also introduces Fohrer’s argument in the setting section. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 70.

⁹¹⁵ Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 159.

⁹¹⁶ Fohrer, *Ezekiel*, 158.

⁹¹⁷ Liverani, “Trade Network of Tyre,” 79.

Arabia, Anatolia, Media, and to the exclusion of the two major powers of Egypt and Babylonia.⁹¹⁸

Indeed, Ezekiel is influenced by King Josiah's program of religious reform and national restoration.⁹¹⁹ Presumably, by locating Judah and the land of Israel in the center of the trading lists (v. 17), Ezekiel describes Jerusalem as the main religious and trading center during the period of religious and political reform led by King Josiah (640–609 BCE).

Admittedly, many critics agree that Ezekiel's trading list demonstrates his in-depth knowledge of the ancient trade routes.⁹²⁰ However, the question naturally arises: how could Ezekiel acquire the knowledge of the ancient trade routes?⁹²¹ With regard to this question, I.M. Diakonoff suggests his solution as follows:

The prophet had sojourned in Tyre for a considerable time, seen the ships unloading their merchandise, met the travelling merchants coming from Asia Minor, Media, Damascus, Palestine, Edom and Sheba, and had the opportunity to identify the particular wares brought by each in their sacks, pythoi, and crates. The picture drawn by Ezekiel obviously refers to the period before the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar II, i.e. before 585 BCE, which is the *terminus ante quem* for acquiring his necessary information. He may have gone from Judah to Tyre in 588 BCE. and stayed there for some time, possibly for one or two years.⁹²²

⁹¹⁸ Liverani, "Trade Network of Tyre," 72.

⁹¹⁹ Marvin A. Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah: The Lost Messiah of Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 139; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 15.

⁹²⁰ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 568; Darr, "Ezekiel," 1370.

⁹²¹ In the conclusion section, I.M. Diakonoff asks this question to understand Ezekiel's knowledge about the trading routs. See Igor M. Diakonoff, "The Naval Power and Trade of Tyre," *Israel Exploration Journal* 42 (1992): 191.

⁹²² Diakonoff, "Naval Power," 191–92.

Building upon Liverani's argument, Diakonoff also argues that "Ezekiel's account of Tyre was no doubt written (and for a long time copied) in a Western Semitic cursive script, used in the offices and schools beginning with the last century of Assyrian rule (seventh century BCE) and down to Parthian times."⁹²³ However, his argument is not persuasive. Since Ezekiel and his fellow exiles were deported to the Chebar canal near Nippur by Babylonians (cf. Ezek 1:1–3), it would have been impossible for Ezekiel alone to make the journey from the Chebar to Tyre without any reason. Greenberg correctly suggests an alternative argument that Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest had access to the full range of information stores of temple and palace.⁹²⁴ For example, Javan, Tubal and Meshech in 27:13 alludes to the Table of Nations in Gen 10:2, which is understood as a priestly source. For Greenberg, the table is generally dated to the seventh century.⁹²⁵

In sum, although it is difficult to assume the overall historical setting of Ezek 27, the list of Tyre's trading partners reflects Jerusalem's economic growth brought about by King Josiah's religious and political restoration after the fall of Nineveh in 612 BCE. With that being so, why did Ezekiel introduce the list in Ezek 27? Is it simply to criticize Tyre's economic growth after the fall of Jerusalem as her primary competitor in 586 BCE? These questions will be answered in the next intention section.

5.4.5. Intention

⁹²³ Diakonoff, "Naval Power," 170.

⁹²⁴ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 569.

⁹²⁵ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 569.

Why did Ezekiel introduce in Ezek 27 the metaphor of Tyre as a ship? What is the purpose of the trading list for Tyre in Ezek 27? To answer these questions, scholars have called attention to the relationship between the temple in Jerusalem and the Tyrian ship.⁹²⁶ Of particular importance is Ezekiel's epithet "I am perfect in beauty (כְּלִילֹת חַיִּים)" (27:3, 4, 11), which is closely connected with the image of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek 16:14). Building upon Rashi's comment on Tyre that "Heretofore all people praised Jerusalem as 'a perfect beauty, the joy of the whole earth' now you vaunt yourself saying 'I am a perfect beauty'!",⁹²⁷ Greenberg argues that Tyre's boast is criticized in Ezek 27:2 because it appropriates Jerusalem's epithet that was regarded as proper to Jerusalem.⁹²⁸ Odell further developed Greenberg's viewpoint and suggested that while Jerusalem's splendor and beauty come from YHWH's gift (Ezek 16:14–15), Tyre's beauty is achieved by her builders (Ezek 27:4). More importantly, John B. Geyer, Ian Douglas Wilson, and Lydia Lee suggest that the materials for the construction of the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27 are closely associated with the materials used for the Israelite temple and tabernacle.⁹²⁹ In one sense, their emphasis on the contrast between the temple in Jerusalem and the Tyrian ship is similar to John T. Strong's argument. Strong argues that Tyre is condemned since Tyre's invincibility could present Tyre as a theological alternative to Zion.⁹³⁰ It is significant that their argument has shed light on the understanding of the relationship between the Tyrian ship and the temple of

⁹²⁶ John B. Geyer, "Ezekiel 27 and the Cosmic Ship," in *Among the Prophets: Language, Image and Structure in the Prophetic Writings*, ed. Philip R. Davies and David J. A. Clines (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 105–26; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 548; Odell, *Ezekiel*, 345; Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 164–69; Ian D. Wilson, "Tyre, a Ship: The Metaphorical World of Ezekiel 27 in Ancient Judah," *ZAW* 125 (2013): 249–62; Lydia Lee, *Mapping Judah's Fate in Ezekiel's Oracles Against the Nations*, Ancient Near East Monographs 15 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 89–122.

⁹²⁷ Cited in Moshe Greenberg's commentary on the book of Ezekiel. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 548.

⁹²⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 548.

⁹²⁹ Geyer, "Ezekiel 27," 116; Wilson, "Tyre, a Ship," 250; Lee, *Mapping Judah's Fate*, 81–83.

⁹³⁰ Strong, "Tyre's Isolationist Policies," 217.

Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they did not examine the fact that Ezekiel obliquely criticized Babylon when he used the image of the Tyrian ship. From a postcolonial perspective, Tyre's boast "I am perfected in beauty" echoes Babylon's claim to be the center of the world as Nebuchadnezzar's building project, especially using the image of a procession ship for Marduk in the Neo-Babylonian akitu Festival.

In this section, from a postcolonial perspective, I will argue that Ezekiel introduces Tyre as a ship, which alludes to a processional ship for Marduk for the Neo-Babylonian akitu festival. This argument is suggested by Christoph Auffarth and Dale F. Launderville.⁹³¹ On the eighth day of Nisan at the Babylonian akitu festival,⁹³² the procession of Marduk's statue in his beautiful ship on the canal can be compared to the beautiful ship of Tyre. While the Jews of the Exile including Ezekiel participated in this festival, they could see its movement into the Esagila, Marduk's palace in Babylon. When we consider that a large moat was outside the high wall which surrounded Babylon,⁹³³ the ship of Tyre in the midst of the sea in Ezek 27 alludes to the city of Babylon. By using the metaphor of a beautiful ship of Tyre, Ezekiel criticizes Marduk's ship as well. Furthermore, by locating Judah and the land of Israel in the center of Tyre's trading list in v. 17, Ezekiel remembers Jerusalem's economic growth and its role as the center of the world during the reign of King Josiah. Such a perspective also criticizes Nebuchadnezzar's building project, in which he attempted to make Babylon the cultic center of the world.⁹³⁴

⁹³¹ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93–94; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 151–52, 155.

⁹³² Sommer, "Babylonian Akitu Festival," 89.

⁹³³ Van de Microop, "Reading Babylon," 262.

⁹³⁴ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 90; Hanspeter Schaudig, "Cult Centralization in the Ancient Near East?: Conceptions of the Ideal Capital in the Ancient Near East," in *One God — One Cult — One Nation: Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives* (Göttingen: De Gruyter, 2010), 159.

Ultimately, just as YHWH's east wind destroys the Tyrian ship in 27:26b, the Neo-Babylonian Empire will be overthrown by YHWH.

It is evident that in Ezek 27 Ezekiel describes the materials for the Tyrian ship from his priestly perspective, which are related to the materials for the temple of Jerusalem. As Jeffrey Kuan analyzes the variant Greek reading of 1 Kgs 5:15 "And Hiram the king of Tyre sent his servants to anoint Solomon in place of David his father, for Hiram always loved David," he argues that Hiram was the superior partner in the relationship between Tyre and the Israelites.⁹³⁵ Kuan suggests that "Solomon, as Hiram's subordinate, had to pay the latter a yearly tribute in addition to the payment for building materials."⁹³⁶ More importantly, based upon archaeological evidence that "the Temple structure as described in the Bible resembles those of its Canaanite prototypes," Kuan argues that the Temple structure is influenced by the Phoenicians, i.e., "Phoenician-modeled Temple."⁹³⁷ Indeed, the materials for the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27 resemble the materials for the Temple in Jerusalem.⁹³⁸ The Hebrew noun קִרְוֹץ "cypress" from Senir for planks of the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27:5a is also used for materials of the temple of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 5:22, 24; 6:15, 34). In 1Kgs 5:22 and 24, Hiram the king of Tyre offered cypress logs to Solomon. In 1Kgs 6:15 and 34, King Solomon overlaid the floor of the Temple with the planks of cypress and made two doors of cypress wood as well. The Hebrew noun אֲרֶז "cedar" from Lebanon for a mast of the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27:5b is also used for materials for the temple of

⁹³⁵ Jeffrey K. Kuan, "Third Kingdoms 5:1 and Israelite-Tyrian Relations during the Reign of Solomon," *JSOT* 15 (1990): 35.

⁹³⁶ Kuan, "Third Kingdoms," 39.

⁹³⁷ Kuan, "Third Kingdoms," 40–41.

⁹³⁸ Sweeney also argues that "Cypress from Senir or Mt. Hermon (Deut 3:9) in northern Israel and cedars from Lebanon were known in antiquity as high-grade wood for building ships and lining interior rooms of buildings such as the Jerusalem Temple or the Davidic palace (1 Kings 6-7)." See Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 136.

Jerusalem (1 Kgs 6:18, 20). In 1Kgs 6:18 and 20, King Solomon made the interior of the Temple with the cedar and overlaid the altar with cedar. For this reason, while John B. Geyer compares the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27 with the cosmic ship known as the Bark of Re in the Egyptian myth, the Amduat, he insists that the materials of Ezek 27 were used in the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the ark, and the tabernacle.⁹³⁹ Recently, following Geyer's argument, Ian Douglas Wilson also argues that "in depicting a ship כָּלִילַת יָפִי and covered in הָדָר the text draws on biblical imagery of Jerusalem and its cult, familiar from the priestly traditions and elsewhere."⁹⁴⁰ More recently, Lydia Lee also proposes that "Ezek 27:3–11 conflates linguistic elements that characterize the tabernacle in the wilderness described in the priestly literature of the Pentateuch, the First Temple depicted in the book of Kings and Chronicles, and the Jerusalem temple alluded to in Ezek 16."⁹⁴¹

If so, why does Ezekiel attempt to compare the image of Jerusalem with the image of the Tyrian ship? It is Ezekiel's emphasis that the beauty (יָפִי) and the splendor (הָדָר) of Jerusalem is perfected (כָּלִילַת) because YHWH bestowed beauty as a gift (Ezek 16:14). In contrast, although human beings perfected the beauty and the splendor of the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27:5 and 10, it will sink down when assaulted by the east wind in v. 26b. This indicates that Tyre cannot be an alternative for Jerusalem. Nancy Bowen also argues that "Ezek 27 presents the possibility that God had nothing to do with Tyre's success."⁹⁴² Although Wilson reads Ezek 27 within the

⁹³⁹ Geyer, *Mythology and Lament*, 48.

⁹⁴⁰ Wilson, "Tyre, a Ship," 257.

⁹⁴¹ Lee, *Mapping Judah's Fate*, 91.

⁹⁴² Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 169.

context of the late Persian period, the fourth century BCE, he offers a valuable suggestion as follows:

By connecting the symbolic world of the Israelite Tabernacle and Temple and that of the Tyrian ship, as highlighted above, the text helps imagine a system in which Jerusalem ultimately receives and utilizes Tyre's precious cargo —thus Tyre is merely the middleman between the periphery and center. Indeed, throughout the Judean prophetic corpus, a world is imagined in which Jerusalem is the center of the universe and Yahweh is its emperor-king. The splendor provided by Tyrian trade in the Iron Age and later — imagined as a ship in Ezek 27 —its cedar and its fine fabrics, was on full display in Yahweh's past dwellings, as they are described in the Pentateuch and in the historiographical books of Kings and Chronicles. And, in the imagined world of the Judean texts, one day mighty Yahweh will return to Jerusalem and his splendid Temple to reign forever over the righteous on the earth, while the haughty merchant ship of Tyre will sink in the seas.⁹⁴³

While Ezekiel's exilic audience read Ezek 27, they naturally compared the image of the Tyrian ship with the image of the First Temple in Jerusalem. They imagined that the center of the world supported by YHWH is not Tyre, but Jerusalem.

Such a perspective can be applied to Ezekiel's hidden transcripts against Babylon. By using the metaphor, the Tyrian ship, Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the imperial strategy of the Neo-Babylonian Empire that Babylon is the center of the world. As Vanderhooft points out, the principal imperial interest of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar focused on the transformation of Babylon into an imperial megalopolis.⁹⁴⁴ He also argues that the Babylonians did not have a specific policy for developing the economies of the peripheral regions or the

⁹⁴³ Wilson, "Tyre, a Ship," 260.

⁹⁴⁴ Vanderhooft, *Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 206.

conquered.⁹⁴⁵ As Martin A. Corral analyzed Nebuchadnezzar's Istanbul-prism fragment, he found that Phoenicians such as Tyre, Gaza, Sidon, Arwad, and Ashdod participated in the construction of the palace since they contributed either raw materials or workmen.⁹⁴⁶ Especially, Tyre supplied mainly raw materials, workmen and precious manufactured items for Babylon and Babylonian cities.⁹⁴⁷ Corral argues that the economic role of Tyre enabled Nebuchadnezzar to make Babylon the most splendid, cultic center in the world.⁹⁴⁸ D. J. Wiseman also observed that Nebuchadnezzar attempted to rebuild Babylon as the cultic center since it was severely depredated by the Assyrian king Sennacherib.⁹⁴⁹ To achieve his primary goal, Nebuchadnezzar required massive tributes including prisoners from his campaigns, while he deported skilled and other laborers into Babylon.⁹⁵⁰ For example, Lydians, Phrygians, Tyrians, and the Judeans around Nippur were conscripted for the rebuilding of Babylon.⁹⁵¹ In particular, Wiseman's description of highly skilled foreigners for the rebuilding of Babylon echoes the builders who perfected the beauty of the Tyrian ship (27:4–11) and the list of imports from Tyre's trading partners (12–25a) as follows:

The finished palace he describes as 'a palace as the seat of my royal authority, a building for the admiration of my people, a place of union for the land.' The construction was

⁹⁴⁵ David S. Vanderhooft, "Babylonian Strategies of Imperial Control in the West : Royal Practice and Rhetoric," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, ed. Oded Lipschits (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2012), 24.

⁹⁴⁶ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 87.

⁹⁴⁷ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 87.

⁹⁴⁸ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 97.

⁹⁴⁹ Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 64–65.

⁹⁵⁰ Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 76.

⁹⁵¹ Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 76–77.

magnificent, the upper walls were decorated all round with a band of blue enamelled bricks and the doors made of cedar, Magan, sisso or ebony-wood encased in bronze or inlaid with silver, gold and ivory. The doorway ceilings coated with lapis lazuli and the threshold, lintel and architraves case in bronze. The rooms themselves were roofed with huge cedar beams from Lebanon, or with selected pine and cypress logs, some covered in gold...

Carpenters or woodworkers (*naggārē*) from Byblos and Arvad were particularly noted and named, presumably for their potential skills. One hundred and twenty-six men from Tyre who were shipwrights or mariners (*malāhhē*) were granted rations of 1/2 sila of (sesame) oil, that is the same as given to three mariners from Ashkelon and the royal princes from Judah held in Babylon.⁹⁵²

Just as builders perfected the beauty of Tyrian ship with their materials and renowned skills, Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt his palace and temple with raw materials and skilled foreigners from everywhere. As we discussed above, the materials for the Tyrian ship are associated with the Temple in Jerusalem. But Ezekiel and his exile community could observe that the materials for the Temple in Jerusalem were used for the rebuilding of the Babylonian temple and palace. Above all, the ship of Tyre in the midst of the sea alludes to the city of Babylon. According to Herodotus, “Babylon...is surrounded by a broad deep moat full of water, and within the moat there is a wall fifty royal cubits wide and two hundred cubits high.”⁹⁵³ With regard to the function of the moat circling Babylon, Marc Van de Mieroop tells us that “combined with the moat, the Babylonians created a vision of the primordial sea out of which arose Babylon.”⁹⁵⁴

⁹⁵² Wiseman, *Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon*, 55, 77.

⁹⁵³ Van de Mieroop, “Reading Babylon,” 262.

⁹⁵⁴ Van de Mieroop, “Reading Babylon,” 262.

In contrast to Babylon as the center of the world, Ezekiel emphasizes that the center of the world is Judah and the land of Israel. With regard to Babylon's imperial strategy in the book of Jeremiah, Steed Vernyl Davidson notes as follows:

The selection of the land of Judah over Babylon stands out as one of the important things of Jeremiah's choice of marginality in this passage. In the political scheme, Babylon is the center and Judah sits on the periphery of the empire. In fact, Judah lies on the furthest west end of the periphery of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. While Jeremiah's choice may signal the choice of the homeland, politically Judah no longer holds the same geo-political significance. It no longer exists as a state with its own monarchy, but through the effects of the Babylonian ruination contains a struggling economy. The strategic importance of Judah for the Babylonians lay in ensuring that it stays out of the orbit and influence of Egypt. The Babylonians appear uninterested in founding a colony in Judah, since they establish no administrative center from which to entrench their presence in the territory. The biblical text suggests a minimal role for the Babylonians in the land, since in the portraits of life in the land under Gedaliah few indications of Babylonian officials overseeing his administration or a squadron of the army protecting his rule from insurgents appear. Historically and biblically, therefore, Judah exists in the text as marginalized territory at this time.⁹⁵⁵

Indeed, the economic status of Judah was ruined by the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 586 BCE. Although Nebuchadrezzar appointed a governor, named Gedaliah, for Judah in 2 Kgs 25:22, he was never financially supported. While Nebuchadrezzar primarily enhanced Babylon as the center of the world, he neglected Judah, on the furthest west end of the periphery of the empire. However, it is significant that Ezekiel located Judah and the land of Israel in the center of the list of Tyre's trading partners in Ezek 27:17, while he omits Babylon. According to Mario Liverani's analysis of the trading list, four concentric belts may be observed as follows:

⁹⁵⁵ Davidson, *Empire and Exile*, 122–23.

1. The inner belt (Judah, Israel, Damascus) supplies agricultural products: wheat, honey, oil, wine, and resins.
2. A second belt (Bet-Togarma, Arab, and Qedar, again Damascus) supplies animals and animal products: horses and mules, sheep and goats, and wool.
3. A third belt (Yawan, Tubal and Meshek, Dedan II, Edom, Eden-Harran-Assur) supplies manufactured products: bronze utensils, textiles, cloth, saddle-cloth and ropes; it supplies also slaves.
4. The outer belt (Tarshish, Seba and Ra‘ma, Dedan I, again Edom) supplies metals and luxury goods: silver, iron, tin, lead, gold, spices, precious stones, ebony, and ivory.⁹⁵⁶

Notice that Egypt and Babylonia are lacking among the trade partners of Tyre. To explain this, Liverani proposes two hypotheses. First, the picture supplied by Ezekiel seems to be completely uninterested in the political situation. Second, Egypt and Babylon, the two paramount markets in the ancient Near East did not provide raw materials for export, but rather imported them from their peripheries.⁹⁵⁷ However, in my view, Ezekiel intentionally omits Egypt and Babylon in order to emphasize the role of Judah and the land of Israel as the center of the world. As we discussed in the setting section, the list reflects the period of religious and political reform led by King Josiah (640–609 BCE). With regard to “Judah and the land of Israel,” Greenberg suggests that “it may refer to trade relations of Tyre with the still extant kingdom of Judah and the inhabitants of the territory of the former kingdom of Israel under foreign domination to be sure.”⁹⁵⁸ According to Sweeney, “King Josiah attempted to bring the territory and people of the

⁹⁵⁶ Liverani, “Trade Network of Tyre,” 73.

⁹⁵⁷ Liverani, “Trade Network of Tyre,” 71.

⁹⁵⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 556.

former northern kingdom of Israel back under Davidic rule.”⁹⁵⁹ Under the reign of King Josiah, Jerusalem functioned as a political and religious center in the Levant. Furthermore, the agricultural products such as wheat, pannag, honey, oil, and balm provided by Judah and the land of Israel in 27:17 are necessary commodities for human beings. By evoking the restoration period of King Josiah, Ezekiel accentuates the fact that the center of the world is not Babylon, but Judah and the land of Israel. As Jean-Pierre Ruiz points out, Ezekiel intentionally inverts the Neo-Babylonian ideology, especially “the distinction between the metropolitan center and the conquered subject peripheries.”⁹⁶⁰

Lastly, Ezekiel introduces the dirge over the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27 in order to criticize a processional ship for Marduk in the Babylonian akitu Festival. In an attempt to achieve their imperial strategy, Babylonians emphasized Marduk’s universal sovereignty in the Babylonian akitu Festival.⁹⁶¹ Nebuchadrezzar’s primary reason for the rebuilding of palaces and temples was to please Marduk.⁹⁶² In contrast, Ezekiel resists Marduk’s supremacy over other gods in the Babylonian akitu Festival. By using the metaphor, the Tyrian ship, Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the beautiful processional ship of Marduk in the Babylonian akitu Festival. As Christoph Auffarth and Lauderville compared the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27 with a processional ship for Marduk in the Babylonian akitu Festival, they suggested that Ezekiel indirectly criticizes the wealth of Babylon and Marduk’s supremacy over the world.⁹⁶³ Christoph Auffarth argues that

⁹⁵⁹ Sweeney, *Form and Intertextuality*, 97.

⁹⁶⁰ Ruiz, “Exile’s Baggage,” 132.

⁹⁶¹ Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 208.

⁹⁶² Wiseman, *Nebuchadrezzar and Babylon*, 55.

⁹⁶³ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93–94; Lauderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 151–55.

Ezekiel reinterpreted the Enuma Elish in the Babylonian akitu Festival for the Babylonian Judean community.⁹⁶⁴ He insists that the book of Ezekiel was written by Ezekiel himself, not by the school of Ezekiel, because Ezekiel straightly performs his message before his audiences and clearly wrote chronological formulae.⁹⁶⁵ According to Auffarth's argument, Ezekiel insists that the procession of god's victory does not mean Marduk's.⁹⁶⁶ At the climax of the Babylonian akitu Festival, Ezekiel saw that YHWH entered His sanctuary at the fall Yahweh's New Year festival.⁹⁶⁷ Although the Temple in Jerusalem is desolate, YHWH as the true king of the world shows his new creation in a vision of the new Temple in Ezek 40–48.⁹⁶⁸ This is YHWH's salvation for the new Israel in Ezek 33–48.⁹⁶⁹ Of particular importance is Auffarth's interpretation of the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27. The wreck of the Tyrian ship and the dirge by her neighbors echo Psalm 48 as Zion's hymn, which was well known to the priest of Jerusalem and his audience.⁹⁷⁰ Auffarth further insists that the Tyrian ship connotes the procession ship for the gods into the great feasts in Babylon.⁹⁷¹ Indeed, the processional ship is made of precious wood and materials.⁹⁷² Auffarth argues that Ezekiel and his fellow deportees had to participate in the festival and observe the procession ship.⁹⁷³ Although Auffarth does not further explain the

⁹⁶⁴ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 116.

⁹⁶⁵ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 108.

⁹⁶⁶ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 114.

⁹⁶⁷ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 114.

⁹⁶⁸ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 109–10.

⁹⁶⁹ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 109.

⁹⁷⁰ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93.

⁹⁷¹ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93.

⁹⁷² Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93.

processional ship in detail, he notes that “concerning the processional ship, Ezekiel composed his lamentation over the proud ship of Tyre—in contrast to the song of praise for the ship.”⁹⁷⁴

Launderville also argues that “just as the ship of Tyre in Ezekiel 27 caught the attention of the many nations and revealed the power of the city-state of Tyre, so also did the processional ship of Marduk on the Arahta-canal during the New Year festival stir up a sense of wonder about the power of Babylon.”⁹⁷⁵ He describes the decoration for the processing ship in Nebuchadrezzar’s Wâdī Brīsā inscription as follows:

His pure processional ship, I coated its sides, front and back, its tackle, its planks, with golden spades and dragons. I adorned it with precious stones and put it in the pure streams of the Euphrates. Like the stars of the firmament, I made its brightness shine. In view of all the people, I filled it with splendor. (VAB 4 156 [Nbk 19 = Wâdī Brīsā] A v 19–30)⁹⁷⁶

For Launderville, the vehicle, the Tyrian ship which symbolizes Tyre’s wealth in Ezek 27 alludes to the processional ship of Marduk.⁹⁷⁷ He further argues that “if the king who is enthroned in Tyre in Ezek 28:2 is imagined as sitting on Tyre as a ship, through juxtaposition with Ezekiel 27:4-11, then the beautiful ship of Tyre can be seen as the processional ship carrying the monarch who claims to be a god.”⁹⁷⁸ His suggestion is valuable as it enables us to understand the

⁹⁷³ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 94.

⁹⁷⁴ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 94.

⁹⁷⁵ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 155.

⁹⁷⁶ Beate Pongratz-Leisten, *Ina Šulmi Īrub: Die Kulttopographische Und Ideologische Programmatik Der Akītu-Prozession in Babylonien Und Assyrien Im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Baghdader Forschungen 16 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994), 78; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 151–55; Van de Mieroop, “Reading Babylon,” 273.

⁹⁷⁷ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 155.

⁹⁷⁸ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 155.

metaphor, the Tyrian ship which also can be applied to the processional ship of Marduk. By appropriating the metaphor of the Tyrian ship, Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the beauty of the processional ship of Marduk.

Above all, while Ezekiel describes YHWH's destruction of the Tyrian ship—which symbolizes the processional ship of Marduk with the east wind (27:26), Ezekiel also highlights YHWH's supremacy over Marduk. Beate Pongratz-Lesten and Marc van de Mieroop argue that the procession of the ship of Marduk over the waters of the canal symbolizes Marduk's victory over chaos, Tiamat.⁹⁷⁹ In the Babylonian New Year festival, the beautiful processional ship of Marduk not only symbolizes Babylon's wealth, but also highlights Marduk's triumph over Tiamat in the *Enuma Elish*. In Ezek 27:25a, the ships of Tarshish travel for Tyre's imports. But in v. 26b, the ship is suddenly wrecked by the east wind in the midst of the sea. As Auffarth points out, v. 26b evokes the wreck of ships of Tarshish by YHWH's east wind in the MT Psalm 48:8 (NRSV 48:7). With regard to Tarshish, Maria Eugenia Aubet notes that "the term Tarshish evolved with time—a destination on the Red Sea, a type of merchant ship, a precious stone—and its original meaning was lost as the centuries passed until it met up with another equally vague term—Tartessos—in the Hellenistic—Roman period."⁹⁸⁰ In 1 Kgs 22:49, Jehoshaphat made Tarshish ships to sail to Ophir for gold but they did not sail because the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber. In Isaiah's oracle against Tyre (Isa 23:1-18), Isaiah commands that this wail be addressed to the ships of Tarshish. Presumably, as Greenberg points out, the ships of Tarshish "designate larger seagoing merchant vessels regardless of origin or port of call."⁹⁸¹

⁹⁷⁹ Pongratz-Leisten, *Ina Šulmi Īrub*, 78; Van de Mieroop, "Reading Babylon," 273.

⁹⁸⁰ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 205.

⁹⁸¹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 561.

More importantly, Ezek 27:26b portrays the wreck of the Tyrian ship by YHWH's east wind. Aloysius Fitzgerald meteorologically investigates texts in the Hebrew Bible and argues that YHWH's east wind is related to the effects of the sirocco which brings rain from the sea or dryness from the desert.⁹⁸² However, in Ezek 27:26b and Psalm 48:8, YHWH's east wind does not mean the sirocco. Rather, YHWH's east wind presents His mythological victory over chaos. As Odell also recognizes the *Chaoskampf* traditions in Ezek 27:26b, she argues that "the sea evokes mythological notions of the powers of chaos, with which the sea is associated in Ezek 27."⁹⁸³ Indeed, Marvin Sweeney also sees that the east wind as YHWH's natural weapon against enemies with which He destroys the Egyptian army at the Red Sea (Exod 14:21).⁹⁸⁴ Just as Marduk destroys the sea monster Tiamat as chaos on the processional boat in the Babylonian New Year festival, YHWH destroys the Tyrian ship as chaos in v. 26b. By replacing Marduk with YHWH, Ezekiel not only emphasizes YHWH's supremacy over Marduk, but also criticizes Marduk's processional ship. With regard to Ezekiel's rhetorical strategy in 27:26b, Carol A. Newsom notes as follows:

After the long, slow description of the construction of the ship and its staffing, Ezekiel simply takes the ship to sea and sinks it in a single, sudden verse (v. 26). Immediately the sense of the fragility of the ship dominates the connotations present to the reader. The metaphoric schema through which the readers have been organizing their ideas of Tyre's wealth and power is itself reordered, so that Tyre is seen to be vulnerable to sudden destruction even at the height of its power. Ezekiel's rather risky rhetorical strategy

⁹⁸² Aloysius Fitzgerald, *The Lord of the East Wind*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph 34 (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2002), 202–9.

⁹⁸³ Odell, *Ezekiel*, 344.

⁹⁸⁴ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 137.

seems worthwhile, since the more one has become committed to the metaphor initially, the more powerful is the reordering of its connotations.⁹⁸⁵

Ezekiel's metaphor of the wreck of the Tyrian ship must have challenged Ezekiel's audiences who are familiar with the processional ship of Marduk. After Ezekiel and the Judean leaders were deported by the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 597 BCE, they lost hope. They might think that their divine king YHWH was defeated by the patron deity of the city of Babylon. As they had to participate in the Babylonian New Year festival, they could see the beautiful processional ship of Marduk which symbolizes Marduk's triumph over the sea monster Tiamat who represents chaos. James C. Scott argues that the dominant elites create unanimity in which they require the conquered to reveal their remorse and apologies.⁹⁸⁶ Their political works culminate in "parades, inaugurations, processions, coronations, and funerals."⁹⁸⁷ Against the imperial strategy, Ezekiel introduces the metaphor of the wreck of the Tyrian ship as hidden transcript. By destroying the Tyrian ship which symbolizes the beautiful processional ship of Marduk by YHWH's east wind, Ezekiel accentuates YHWH's kingship over chaos, even over Marduk.

5.5. Judgment and Dirge over the Ruler of Tyre (Ezek 28:1–19)

5.5.1. Translation and Critical notes

¹ and the word of YHWH came to me, saying,

⁹⁸⁵ Newsom, "Maker of Metaphors," 157.

⁹⁸⁶ Scott, *Domination*, 58.

⁹⁸⁷ Scott, *Domination*, 58.

² *Ben Adam*,⁹⁸⁸ say to the prince (נְגִידָה) of Tyre. Thus says the LORD⁹⁸⁹ YHWH

Because (לְעַל) your *heart grew haughty* (הִגְבִּיחַ), and you said, “I am a god. I sit in the seat of God in the *heart* of the seas”

But you are Adam and no god, though you gave to your *heart* like the *heart* of God.

³ Behold! You are wiser than *Danel*

All closed things never darkened you⁹⁹⁰

⁴ By your *wisdom* (חֵכְמָה) and your understanding, you gained *wealth* (עוֹלָה) for yourself

And you gained gold and silver in your treasuries.

⁵ By your great *wisdom* (חֵכְמָה) in your trade, you have increased your *wealth* (עוֹלָה).

And your *heart* became haughty because of your *wealth* (עוֹלָה).

⁶ Therefore (לְכֵן), thus says the LORD⁹⁹¹ YHWH

Because (לְעַל) you set your *heart* as the *heart* of God.

⁷ Therefore (לְכֵן), behold! I am going to bring strangers against you, most terrifying nations

And they shall draw their swords against the beauty (יָפִי) of your *wisdom* (חֵכְמָה)

And they shall defile your splendor (יְפָעָה)⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁸ LXX inserts καὶ σὺ “and you.”

⁹⁸⁹ LXX omits “the LORD.”

⁹⁹⁰ The BHS critical apparatus suggests עֲמִיק מִמֶּךָ “deep than you” cf. Syriac and Targum versions read it as “No secret do they hold dark for you.”; By adding the Greek noun σοφοὶ “the wise,” LXX renders v. 3b as “Have not the wise instructed you with their knowledge?” Block argues that LXX’s rendering is influenced by the following verses. See Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 91.

⁹⁹¹ LXX omits “the LORD.”

⁹⁹² The Hebrew noun יְפָעָה “splendor” only occurs twice in Ezek 28 (28:7, 17).

⁸ They shall bring you down to the Pit

And you shall die the death of the slain in the *heart* of the seas.

⁹ Will you still say, “I am a god” before your slayer?⁹⁹³

And you are a man (Adam) and no god in the hand of⁹⁹⁴ those who wound you.

¹⁰ The death of the uncircumcised you shall die by the hand of strangers

For I, I spoke, the declaration of the LORD⁹⁹⁵ YHWH

¹¹ and the word of YHWH came to me, saying

¹² *Ben Adam*, raise a dirge over the king (מֶלֶךְ) of Tyre

And you shall say to him, thus says the LORD⁹⁹⁶ YHWH

You⁹⁹⁷ were the sealer (חֹתֵם) of proportion (תְּבִנִית),⁹⁹⁹

full of *wisdom* (חֵכְמָה)¹⁰⁰⁰ and perfect in beauty (יָפֵי).

¹³ In Eden, the garden of God, you were; Every precious stone was your covering: Carnelian, topaz (chrysolite), and amethyst, beryl, sapphire, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and emerald¹⁰⁰¹

⁹⁹³ Many manuscripts, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate versions read it as הַרְגִּיךָ “your slayers.”

⁹⁹⁴ LXX render it as ἐν πλῆθει “in the multitude.”

⁹⁹⁵ LXX omits “the LORD.”

⁹⁹⁶ LXX omits “the LORD.”

⁹⁹⁷ The Hebrew noun second masculine singular אַתָּה.

⁹⁹⁸ The MT kethib indicates the qal participle masculine singular construct of the Hebrew word “חֹתֵם.” BDB translates it as “sealing” but admits that the word is obscure. *BDB*, 367. Following Gressmann’s suggestion “who seals,” HALOT renders it as “seal keeper.” *HALOT*, 364. Some manuscripts, the LXX, Aquila, Syriac, and Vulgate versions render it as חֹתֶם “signet.” Many manuscripts, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate versions render it as תְּבִנִית “likeness.”

⁹⁹⁹ BDB translates the Hebrew noun תְּבִנִית as “proportion.” Cf. Ezek 43:10. *BDB*, 1067.

¹⁰⁰⁰ LXX omits “full of wisdom.”

and of gold was the work of your hand-drums¹⁰⁰² and your sockets (settings) in you.¹⁰⁰³

On the day that you were created (בְּרֵא) they were made ready.¹⁰⁰⁴

¹⁴ You¹⁰⁰⁵ were a cherub with outstretched (or anointed) shielding¹⁰⁰⁶

And I set you¹⁰⁰⁷ on the holy mountain of God; You were

in the midst of the stones of fire. You walked about.

¹⁵ You¹⁰⁰⁸ were blameless in your ways from the day that you were created (בְּרֵא)

Until wrongdoing¹⁰⁰⁹ was found in you.

¹⁶ In the abundance of your trade, they filled (מָלֵא)¹⁰¹⁰ among you with violence and you sinned

¹⁰⁰¹ The BHS critical apparatus indicates that LXX lists twelve stones. Most critics that LXX refers to the breastplate of the Israelite high priest (cf. Exodus 28:17-20; 39:10-13). See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 92; Robert R. Wilson, “The Death of the King of Tyre: The Editorial History of Ezekiel 28,” in *Love & Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope*, ed. Barry Eichler and Jeffrey Tigay (Guilford, CT: Four Quarters Publishing, 1987), 214; Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 582; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 107–10.

¹⁰⁰² Or golden hand-drums; LXX renders it as ἐνέπλησας τοὺς θησαυρούς σου “you filled your treasures.” Probably נִכְתִּיד-בֵּית מְלָא וזהב With regard to hand-drums, Aquila and Theodotion version render it as ἔργον τοῦ κάλλους σου “the work of your beauty.”; cf. Targum and Vulgate render it as opus decoris tui “the work of your beauty.”

¹⁰⁰³ The BHS critical apparatus indicates that the Hebrew preposition with suffix second feminine singular “בְּךָ” is dittography.

¹⁰⁰⁴ LXX omits the polal form of the Hebrew verb כוֹנֵן “to be made ready.”

¹⁰⁰⁵ According to the *Marsorah parva*, the Hebrew pronoun second feminine singular אַתְּ occurs three times in the form of second masculine singular in the Hebrew Bible: Num 11:15; Deut 5:27; Ezek 28:14. LXX and Syriac versions render אַתְּ-כְּרוּב as μετὰ τοῦ χερουβ “with you Cherub.” LXX read the Hebrew preposition אַתְּ as “with.” NRSV follows LXX’s reading.

¹⁰⁰⁶ LXX omits מְשֹׁחַ הַסֹּכֶךְ “anointed, shielding.” The Hebrew noun מְשֹׁחַ can be translated as “anointed” because of the Hebrew verb מָשַׁח “to anoint.” (cf. NIV and NRSV render it as “anointed.”). NJPS renders it as “outstretched.” BDB renders this part as “cherub of expansion.” BDB 603.

¹⁰⁰⁷ LXX reads it as ἔθηκά σε “I placed you.” The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading it as נִתְּחִיד “I placed you (suffix feminine singular).”

¹⁰⁰⁸ In contrast to v. 14, the subject of v. 15 is the Hebrew pronoun second masculine singular אַתָּה “you.”

¹⁰⁰⁹ According to Block, the Hebrew noun עֲוֹלָה “wrongdoing or injustice” as a variation of עָוֶל “iniquity” (cf. v. 18) is Ezekiel’s favorite word. (cf. 3:20; 18:8; 24, 26; 33:13, 15, 18). See Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 101.

And I *profaned* (חָלַלְתִּי) you¹⁰¹¹ from the mountain of God and I destroyed you,¹⁰¹² Shielding¹⁰¹³ cherub, from among the fiery stones.

¹⁷ Your *heart grew haughty* (גָּבַהּ) because of your *beauty*. You corrupted your *wisdom* because of your *splendor* (יְפָעָה)

I cast you to the ground. Before kings, I made you an object to stare at you.

¹⁸ By the multitude of your iniquities,¹⁰¹⁴ because of the iniquity of your trade, you *profaned* (חָלַלְתִּי) your sanctuaries¹⁰¹⁵

And I brought out fire from you.¹⁰¹⁶ It devoured you and I turned you into ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching you.

¹⁹ All who knew you among the peoples are appalled at you

You have become *Horrors* and you shall be no more forever.

5.5.2. Structure

I.	The second announcement of judgment oracle against the ruler of Tyre	Ezek 28:1–10
A.	Ezekiel’s account of YHWH’s Instruction	1–2α ⁹
	1. Prophetic word formula	1
	2. YHWH’s instruction	2α ¹ –2α ⁹

¹⁰¹⁰ HALOT explains that the Hebrew perfect third common plural form “they filled” is a variation of מָלֵא/מָלְאוּ. HALOT, 583. LXX reads it as מָלְאָתָּ “you filled.”

¹⁰¹¹ LXX reads this part as καὶ ἐτραυματίσθης “and you were wounded.”

¹⁰¹² LXX reads this part as καὶ ἤγαγέν σε “and he (cherub) brought you out.” With regard to הֵצִיאָךְ, BDB notes it as Piel imperfect first common singular. BDB, 1–2.

¹⁰¹³ LXX omits הִסְתִּיךָ “shielding.”

¹⁰¹⁴ Targum and many manuscripts versions render this part as “your iniquity (singular).”

¹⁰¹⁵ Many manuscripts, Syrian and Targum this part render as “your sanctuary (singular).”

¹⁰¹⁶ The BHS critical apparatus suggests its reading as “from it.”

a. Ben Adam	2aα ¹
b. Speaking to the prince of Tyre	2aα ³⁻⁵
c. The prophetic messenger formula	2aα ⁶⁻⁹
B. Prophetic Announcement of Judgment against the prince of Tyre	2aα ¹⁰ –10bα
a. Prophetic Announcement against the prince of Tyre	2aα ¹⁰ –5
1) Reason of the Prophetic Judgment	2aα ¹⁰ –2aα ²⁰
a) Because (יָצַח) your heart grew haughty	2aα ¹⁰ –2aα ¹²
b) The prince of Tyre's arrogant claim to be a god	2aα ¹³ –2aα ¹⁵
c) The throne in the heart of the sea	2aα ¹⁶ –2aα ²⁰
2) YHWH's statement against the prince of Tyre	2bα ¹ –2bα ⁸
a) You are Adam and not a god	2bα ¹ –2bα ⁴
b) Your heart like the heart of God	2bα ⁵ –2bα ⁸
3) YHWH's statement about the wisdom of the prince of Tyre	3–5
a) Wiser than Danel in the Ugaritic Aqhat Epic	3a
b) All closed things never darken you	3b
c) Commercial success because of wisdom and understanding	4
d) Your wealth because of great wisdom and understanding	5a
e) Your heart grew haughty because of your wealth	5b
b. Prophetic Announcement of Punishment against the prince of Tyre	6–10
1) Therefore (כֵּן) pattern with the prophetic messenger formula	6a
2) Reason of the Prophetic Judgment	6b
a) Because (יָצַח) your heart like the heart of God	6b
3) Announcement of YHWH's judgment against Tyre by nations	7–10a
a) Therefore (כֵּן) pattern	7aα ¹
b) YHWH's judgment against Tyre by most terrifying nations	7aα ² –10a
(1) Most terrifying nations against Tyre	7aα ² –7aα ⁷
(2) Sword against the beauty of your wisdom and splendor	7b
(3) Thrust you down to the Pit	8a
(4) Death of the slain in the heart of the sea	8b
(5) YHWH's rhetorical question	9a
: will you still say, "I am a god" before your slayer?	
(6) You are Adam and not a god in the hand of those who wound you	9b
(7) The death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers	10a
c) Conclusion formula with the prophetic oracular formula	10b
II. The dirge over the king of Tyre	28:11–19
A. Ezekiel's account of YHWH's instruction	11–12bβ
1. Prophetic word formula	11
2. YHWH's instruction	12aα ¹ –12bα ⁶
a. Ben Adam	12aα ¹
b. Dirge against the king of Tyre	12aα ²⁻⁷
c. You shall say to him	12bα ¹⁻²
d. The prophetic messenger formula	12bα ³⁻⁶
B. Dirge over the king of Tyre	12bα ⁷ –19a
1. Past glory of the king of Tyre	12bα ⁷ –15a
a. The sealer of proportion and perfect in beauty	12bα ⁷⁻¹³

b. Location: in the garden of Eden	13aα ¹⁻⁴
c. Nine stones, golden hand-drums, and sockets since creation	13aα ⁵ –13bα ⁸
d. The Tyrian king as a cherub with outstretched shielding	14a
e. Location: on the holy mountain of God	14b
f. Blameless in your ways since creation	15a
2. First statement of sin of the king of Tyre and YHWH's punishment	15b–16
a. Wrongdoing of the king of Tyre: General introduction	15b
b. First sin of the king of Tyre	16a
c. YHWH's first punishment	16b
1) Profanement from the mountain of God	16bα ¹⁻³
2) Destruction of shielding cherub by the fiery stones	16bα ⁴⁻⁹
3. Second statement of sin of the king of Tyre and YHWH's punishment	17
a. Second sin of the king of Tyre	17aα ¹⁻³ –17aα ⁴⁻⁷
1) Your heart grew haughty because of your beauty	17aα ¹⁻³
2) You corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor	17aα ⁴⁻⁷
b. YHWH's second punishment	17b
4. Third statement of sin of the king of Tyre and YHWH's punishment	18a–19a
a. Third sin of the king of Tyre	18a
b. YHWH's third punishment	18b–19
1) Fire will devour you	18bα ¹⁻⁵
2) You will become ashes before watchers	18bα ⁶⁻¹²
3) Appallment among the nations	19a
5. Refrain: Horrors and you shall be no more	19b

Ezek 28:1–19 as a literary unity is constituted by two major sections: YHWH's judgment against the prince of Tyre (vv. 1–10) with a dirge over the king of Tyre (vv. 11–19). Many critics point out that the two major sections were not originally united because of their different subject and genre.¹⁰¹⁷ For example, while the first major section (vv. 1–10) announces YHWH's judgment against the prince (נָשִׂיךְ) of Tyre, the second major section (vv. 11–19) announces Ezekiel's dirge over the king (מֶלֶךְ) of Tyre. However, as we discussed above, Ezek 28:1–19 is demarcated at the outset by the prophetic word formula (v. 1) and the last refrain (v. 19b). The first prophetic word formula indicates a new oracle account concerning the ruler of Tyre (vv. 1–19). The second prophetic word formula in v. 11 indicates the second major section concerning the king of Tyre

¹⁰¹⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 73; Wilson, "King of Tyre," 211–12.

(vv. 11–19) in Ezek 28:1–19. Although Ezekiel uses two different Hebrew nouns for the ruler of Tyre (v. 2, v. 12),¹⁰¹⁸ as Daniel Block points out, the central message of two major sections is clear; “Human hubris must be answered by divine judgment.”¹⁰¹⁹ Above all, the last refrain among the Tyrian oracles Ezek 26:21a, 27:36b, and 28:19b) occurs in v. 19b.

The first major section (vv. 1–10) concerning YHWH’s judgment oracle against the prince of Tyre begins with the prophetic word formula (v. 1). The addressee of YHWH’s instruction in vv. 1–2α⁹ is Ezekiel as Ben Adam which symbolizes a Zadokite priest of Jerusalem.¹⁰²⁰ While Ezekiel’s judgment oracle is the city Tyre in Ezek 26, his judgment oracle is the prince (נָאִי) of Tyre in Ezek 28. Following the prophetic messenger formula in v. 2α^{6–9}, Ezekiel announces his prophetic announcement of judgment against the prince of Tyre in vv. 2α¹⁰–10bα. The first subunit of the passage appears in vv. 2α¹⁰–5. It begins with the Hebrew particle כִּי “because” in v. 2α¹⁰. Verses 2α^{10–15} accuse the prince of Tyre of his announcement as a god. However, verses 2bα¹–2bα⁴ reject his announcement: “You are Adam and not a god.” It is significant that vv. 2α¹⁰–2bα⁸ formulate an *inclusio*: A: “Your heart grew haughty” (v. 2α¹⁰), B: “I am a god, enthroned in the heart of the sea” (vv. 2α¹³–2α²⁰), A’: “Your heart like the heart of God” (v. 2bα⁸). Verses 3–5 describe YHWH’s statement about the wisdom of the prince of Tyre. As verse 3 begins with the Hebrew particle “behold,” it introduces the wisdom of the prince and his wealth. For this reason, Robert R. Wilson argue that vv. 3–5 are the work of

¹⁰¹⁸ Greenberg argues that the Hebrew noun נָאִי “prince” is used as synonym of the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ “king” in the following oracle in v. 12. Similarly, as Sweeney agrees with Greenberg’s argument, he suggests that “formulated as a passive participial form of the verb root *ngd*, “to be conspicuous, to tell or declare (BDB, 616-18),” it probably means “designated one” or the like.” (cf. 1 Sam 9:16; 2 Sam 6:21; 1 Kgs 1:35; 2 Kgs 20:5). See Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 572; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 138.

¹⁰¹⁹ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 88.

¹⁰²⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 138.

the editor because these verses deal with the wisdom of the prince, which seems to be unrelated to the hubris of the prince.¹⁰²¹ However, as Greenberg points out, vv. 3–5 not only give particulars of the indictment in vv. 2a¹⁰-10b^a, but also repeat the keywords “heart” and “god.”¹⁰²² Above all, by using the Hebrew noun ^{הָיֵל} “wealth” three times in vv. 3–5, these verses echo the wealth from other countries in Ezek 27. Furthermore, v. 5 ends with the Hebrew verb ^{גָּבַהּ} “to grow haughty,” which is also used in v. 2a¹¹.

The second subunit of the passage appears in vv. 6–10, which begins with the Hebrew particle ^{לָכֵן} “therefore” with the prophetic messenger formula. The Hebrew particle ^{יַעַן} “because” in v. 6b introduces the reason for YHWH’s accusation as a summary of the previous section (vv. 2a¹⁰–5): “Because (^{יַעַן}) you set your heart as the heart of God.” By introducing the Hebrew particle ^{לָכֵן} “therefore,” vv. 7–10a portray YHWH’s judgment against the prince of Tyre in detail. Verses 7–8 evoke Nebuchadrezzar and his army’s battle against the city Tyre in Ezek 26:7–14, although these verses mention “terrifying strangers” as YHWH’s instrument. Furthermore, v. 8 begins with “the Pit (^{שַׁחַת}), they shall bring you down,” which evokes YHWH’s judgment against the city Tyre, “with those who go down to the Pit (^{בֹּרַחַת})” in 26:20. It is noteworthy that verse 7 uses the Hebrew word ^{יָפִי} “beauty” for wisdom, which not only connects with the theme of wisdom in the first section, but also evokes the beauty of the Tyrian ship in Ezek 27. Verse 9 introduces the rhetorical question, which negates the hubris of the ruler of Tyre in v. 2a: “You are Adam and no god.” Verse 10a reuses the Hebrew noun ^{אָדָם}

¹⁰²¹ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 212.

¹⁰²² Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 576.

“strangers” in v. 7, which constructs a chiasmic structure for vv. 7–10.¹⁰²³ In v. 10, the conclusion formula “for I, I spoke” with the prophetic oracular formula “the declaration of the LORD YHWH” concludes the first major section (vv. 1–10).

The second major section (vv. 11–19) begins with the prophetic word formula in v. 11, which introduces YHWH’s instruction for Ezekiel’s dirge over the king of Tyre in vv. 12–19. Like the first major section, the addressee of YHWH’s instruction (11–12bβ) is Ezekiel as Ben Adam, which connotes a Zadokite priest.¹⁰²⁴ It is remarkable that just as the first judgment account against the city of Tyre in Ezek 26 is followed by the first dirge by Ezekiel Ben Adam in Ezek 27, YHWH’s judgment against the hubris of the prince of Tyre in vv. 1–10 is also followed by Ezekiel’s dirge over the king of Tyre in vv. 11–19. In v. 19, Ezekiel’s account of YHWH’s instruction ends with the prophetic messenger formula.

Verses 12bα⁷–19a introduce a dirge over the king of Tyre, which consists of the past glory of the king of Tyre (12bα⁷–15a) and three present judgment statements (15b–19a). The past glory of the king of Tyre section (vv. 12bα⁷–13aα⁴) presents a general form of dirge, which performs a 3/2 metrical pattern. Verse 12bα⁷⁻⁹ portrays the Tyrian king as a “sealer of proportion.” At the same time, verse 12bα¹⁰⁻¹³ states that he is “full of wisdom” and “perfect in beauty.” By introducing the two Hebrew words חֵכֶם “wisdom” and יָפִי “beauty,” which are also used in the first major section (vv. 1–10), v. 12b connects the second major section (vv. 11–19) with the first major section. Verse 13aα¹⁻⁴ says that the Tyrian king was in the Garden of Eden.” In v. 13aα⁵⁻¹³, the 3/2 metrical dirge pattern is interrupted by the prose style of the description of

¹⁰²³ Allen also explains the chiasmic structure of vv. 7–10, while he refers to Parunak’s structural studies of Ezek 28. See Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 92.

¹⁰²⁴ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 140.

nine precious stones. But in v. 13b⁵⁻⁷, the description of the creation of the Tyrian king follows the 3/2 metrical pattern again. Verse 14a portrays the Tyrian king as a cherub with outstretched shielding, although the LXX reading offers a different interpretation: “the Tyrian king was with a cherub.” Verse 14b describes that he was on the holy mountain of God and walked in the midst of the stones of fire. It is significant that Ezekiel identifies the Garden of Eden (v. 13a¹⁻⁴) with the holy mountain of God (v. 14b). Verse 15a affirms that when the Tyrian king was created, he was blameless. It is observed that v. 13b and v. 15a uses the Hebrew verb **בָּרָא** “create.” By repeating the same Hebrew word, this section highlights the Tyrian king’s origin and his place.

The first subunit of Ezekiel’s three present judgment statements in vv. 15b–19a is vv. 15b–16, which portrays Ezekiel’s first statement of the Tyrian king’s sin and YHWH’s judgment. Verse 15b employs the Hebrew particle **עַד** “until,” which transits the Tyrian king’s previous glory to his present sin. Verse 16a introduces the first sin of the Tyrian king in detail: “with the abundance of trade, they filled among you with violence and you sinned.” It is observed that verse 16a reuses the Hebrew word **תְּכָלֶה** “trade,” which reminds audiences of the Tyrian king’s wealth through his trade in v. 5. Verse 16b portrays YHWH’s first judgment because of the Tyrian king’s sin: “and I profaned you from the mountain of God and I destroyed you, Shielding cherub, from among the fiery stones.”

The second subunit of Ezekiel’s three present judgment statements in vv. 15b–19a is v. 17, which portrays the Tyrian king’s pride as his sin and his casting down to the ground as YHWH’s judgment. In v. 17a, two statements “your heart grew haughty because of your beauty. You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor” echo the first major section (vv. 1–10). YHWH’s judgment “I cast you to the ground before kings. I made you an object to be stared

at you” in v. 17b also resembles YHWH’s judgment in v. 8, which describes that strangers shall thrust the Tyrian king down to the Pit.

The third subunit of Ezekiel’s three present judgment statements in vv. 15b–19a is vv. 18a–19a, which portrays the Tyrian king’s profanement of the sanctuary with iniquity of trade as his sin and fire as YHWH’s judgment. Verse 18a not only reuses the Hebrew word *ṛḵלָה* “trade” in v. 16a, but also adds two Hebrew synonyms: *עֲוֹן* “iniquity, guilt”¹⁰²⁵ and *עָוָל* “injustice, unrighteousness.”¹⁰²⁶ Thus, v. 18a highlights the unrighteousness of his trade that defiled his sanctuaries. Verse 18b describes YHWH’s fire that devoured and turned him into ashes on the ground. This description resembles YHWH’s judgment in v. 16b. The last statement of v. 19a also echoes the appallment of coastlands of Ezek 26:16. Then, the third subunit ends with the refrain “Horrors and you shall be no more forever” in v. 19b, which is also the last refrain among the Tyrian oracles (cf. Ezek 26:21a, 27:36b, and 28:19b).

5.5.3. Genre

The genre of Ezek 28:1–19 is the combination of a PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUNISHMENT AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL (vv. 1–10) and a DIRGE (vv. 11–19). Interpreters generally recognize Ezek 28:1–11 as an example of PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUNISHMENT AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL. According to Marvin A. Sweeney, it is “a subgenre of the prophetic announcement of disaster against an individual (cf. 1 Sam 2:27–36; Isa 22:16–24; Amos 7:14–17; Jer 20:1–6) or a group of individuals (cf. 1 Kgs 14:7–11; Jer 23:2, 9–12, 13–15) as

¹⁰²⁵ BDB, 730.

¹⁰²⁶ BDB, 732.

punishment for a specified offense.”¹⁰²⁷ The first major section (vv. 1–10) includes the two-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING. Unlike a three-part PROOF SAYING in Ezek 26:1–6, it omits THE RECOGNITION FORMULA. The two-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING employs two elements: כִּי “because” to introduce the reason and לָכֵן “therefore” to connect the reason to the announcement.¹⁰²⁸ In 28:2, Ezekiel announces the reason for judgment against the prince of Tyre with the Hebrew particle כִּי “because” (v. 2a α ¹⁰). In 28:6a, the Hebrew particle לָכֵן “therefore” introduces THE PROPHETIC MESSENGER FORMULA, which certifies the following as an oracle from YHWH.¹⁰²⁹ In 28:6b, the Hebrew particle כִּי “because” reappears as a brief summary of the previous accusation in v. 2a α ¹⁰-5: “because you set your heart as the heart of God.” The reason is linked by the Hebrew particle לָכֵן “therefore” in v. 7, which introduces “terrifying strangers” against the prince of Tyre as YHWH’s judgment.

The second major section (vv. 11–19) is a DIRGE. In v. 12, Ezekiel explicitly uses the Hebrew noun קִינָה “dirge.” As we discussed above, it consists of the past glory of the king of Tyre (12b α ⁷–15a) and three present judgment statements (15b–19a). As Hedwig Jahnow points out, the contrast between former glory and the present disaster is expressed with the characteristics of a communal funeral dirge.¹⁰³⁰ The past glory of the king of Tyre section (vv. 12b α ⁷–13a α ⁴) presents a general form of dirge, which performs a 3/2 metrical pattern. However, the DIRGE of the second major section is not a regular form of the DIRGE. First, like the DIRGE in Ezek 19 and 27, it does not begin with the Hebrew interjection particle *êk* “how.” Second, in v.

¹⁰²⁷ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 530.

¹⁰²⁸ Hals, *Ezekiel*, 31.

¹⁰²⁹ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 139.

¹⁰³⁰ Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, 212.

13aα⁵⁻¹³, the 3/2 metrical dirge pattern is interrupted by the prose style of the description of nine precious stones. Third, while DIRGES in Ezek 26 and 27 include the weeping of mourners for Tyre, the DIRGE of Ezek 28 does not include it. With regard to the irregular form of a DIRGE in Ezek 28, Jahnow notes that “our song contains nothing of the genre of the ancient Qina except the opposite of once (Einst) and now (Jetzt), apparently the moment in the myth that attracted the prophet here to apply the genre and furthermore it has no motives of the reward, the glee and the grief of the spectators.”¹⁰³¹ W. Randall Garr even omits the analysis of Ezek 28, although he discusses both Ezek 19 and 27.¹⁰³² For this reason, Zimmerli attempts to reconstruct the original dirge pattern in vv. 12bα⁷–19a.¹⁰³³ However, his reconstruction of the original dirge pattern is artificial. The absence of the description of nine precious stones in his reconstruction is even problematic, because Ezekiel expects his audiences to catch the meaning of the nine precious stones, which was used for the high priest (cf. Exodus 28:17-20; 39:10-13). In contrast to Zimmerli’s restoration of a 3/2 meter, Hals criticizes Zimmerli for paying little attention to content of vv. 12–19.¹⁰³⁴ He further argues that “meter is after all a feature of Hebrew parallelism, in which the parts of the line or the lines themselves exist in a kind of thought rhyme.”¹⁰³⁵ More recently, Greg Schmidt Goering suggests that the genre of Ezek 28:11–19 is a dirge-enhanced *mashal*.¹⁰³⁶ Goering’s argument is based upon Gale Yee’s genre analysis of Isa 14:4b–21. According to Yee, the *Sitz im Leben* of Isa 14 is a funeral setting but parodies the

¹⁰³¹ Jahnow, *Das Hebräische Leichenlied*, 228.

¹⁰³² Garr, “Qinah,” 63–68.

¹⁰³³ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 89.

¹⁰³⁴ Hals, *Ezekiel*, 199.

¹⁰³⁵ Hals, *Ezekiel*, 199.

¹⁰³⁶ Goering, “Proleptic Fulfillment,” 497.

DIRGE form.¹⁰³⁷ She argues that the DIRGE of Isa 14 is sung not after the death of a hero, but during the life of a tyrant.¹⁰³⁸ Since a DIRGE is typically sung at the funeral ritual, the DIRGE of Isa 14 for the living tyrant presents a PARODY to his audiences. For Yee, the PARODY not only consoles the oppressed, but also proleptically foretells the tyrant's funeral.¹⁰³⁹ Goering applies her argument to the DIRGE of Ezek 28. Like Isaiah 14, a DIRGE of Ezek 28 is a kind of PARODY of the funeral DIRGE for the living Tyrian king in 573 BCE.¹⁰⁴⁰ By using the proleptic nature of DIRGE as his powerful rhetorical device, Ezekiel emphasizes the certainty of divine judgment against the Tyrian king.¹⁰⁴¹ Indeed, as we discussed in the structure section, the DIRGE of Ezek 28 presents several rhetorical elements to ridicule the Tyrian king's glorious past: 1) the reiteration of the location of the Tyrian king ("in the Garden of Eden" in v. 13a and "on the holy mountain of God" in v. 14b), 2) although the Tyrian king's wisdom based upon his trade (cf. vv. 4–5) enables his perfect in beauty in v.12, it becomes his violence in v. 16. By using such an irregular DIRGE form as a PARODY, Ezekiel not only consoles his audiences, but also proleptically anticipates the death of the living Tyrian king.

5.5.4. Setting

¹⁰³⁷ Gale A. Yee, "The Anatomy of Biblical Parody: The Dirge Form in 2 Samuel 1 and Isaiah 14," *CBQ* 50 (1988): 581.

¹⁰³⁸ Yee, "Anatomy of Biblical Parody," 581.

¹⁰³⁹ Yee, "Anatomy of Biblical Parody," 582.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Goering, "Proleptic Fulfillment," 503.

¹⁰⁴¹ Goering, "Proleptic Fulfillment," 583.

Like Ezek 27, it is difficult to assume the exact date of the historical setting of Ezek 28 due to the absence of the chronological formula. Some scholars have identified the ruler of Tyre with Ethbaal III (591/90–574/73 BCE), based upon Katzenstein’s historical approach to Tyre.¹⁰⁴² They consider that the historical setting would be before the siege of Nebuchadrezzar and his army against Tyre in 573/572 BCE (cf. Ezek 29:17–21). As Katzenstein refers to Nebuchadrezzar’s “court calendar” which is dated about 570 BCE, he argues that king Ethbaal III was deported to Babylon after the siege of Tyre, although the conquest failed in 573/572 BCE.¹⁰⁴³ Nevertheless, the text itself does not clearly describe the name of the Tyrian king. For this reason, Zimmerli concludes that the text does not depict individual characteristics of the Tyrian king, but typical ones.¹⁰⁴⁴

One of the controversial disputes for the Tyrian ruler in Ezek 28 is his divinity. In vv. 2aα¹³–2aα²⁰, Ezekiel describes the Tyrian ruler’s pride and his own claiming: “I am a god, enthroned in the heart of the sea.” Building upon Frankfort’s analysis of divine kingship, Zimmerli argues that the Tyrian king’s divine kingship was influenced by the Pharaoh of Egypt.¹⁰⁴⁵ In his book, *Kingship and the Gods*, Frankfort argues that “while the Egyptians saw Pharaoh as a god, the Mesopotamians viewed their king as a mortal endowed with a divine burden.”¹⁰⁴⁶ As we discussed in chapter three, Naram-Sin in the Curse of Agade was denounced

¹⁰⁴² Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 295–347; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 93; Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 60; Corral, *Ezekiel’s Oracles*, 156–63. Building upon Katzenstein’s argument, Allen notes that Ethbaal II would be the ruler of Tyre. But according to Katzenstein’s list of the Tyrian kings, the king of Ezek 28 is Ethbaal III (591–573 BCE), not Ethbaal II (750–740 BCE). See Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 349.

¹⁰⁴³ Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre*, 326–27; Corral, *Ezekiel’s Oracles*, 166.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 7.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 78.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 106.

because of his sacrilegious behavior and his divinity. Since Mesopotamians and the Israelites could not accept the divine kingship, the Tyrian king's claim to be a god would be sacrilegious behavior. Block also argues that the Tyrian king's divinity might have shocked Phoenicians because their viewpoint about the divine kingship is similar to Mesopotamians and the Israelites.¹⁰⁴⁷ In contrast, as Greenberg analyzes the Phoenician king's divinity, he offers us some evidence. First, in the ritual of "Awakening of Melkart," the Tyrian city god, the king was a hypostasis of a god.¹⁰⁴⁸ Second, Aelian in the second century CE, Rome reports that "the Phoenician royal family claimed descent from the gods."¹⁰⁴⁹ Recently, Markus Saur insists that the burning of the king of Tyre in Ezek 28:18 would be the Carthaginian king Amilkas.¹⁰⁵⁰ Based upon Herodotus' report of king Amilkas, Saur notes that king Amilkas was depicted as "the self-immolation of a Punic king."¹⁰⁵¹ When king Amilkas saw his soldiers retreating, he threw himself in the sacrificial fire and burned himself.¹⁰⁵² Similarly, as Maria Eugenia Aubet has called attention to the Phoenician religion, Ezek 28 portrays that the Tyrian king could achieve his wealth under the aegis of Melkart, the Tyrian city god.¹⁰⁵³ Thus, she argues that "the Phoenician kings were not priests of just any divinity but of the chief divinity in the metropolitan pantheon, which conferred on the local god the title of the authentic lord of the city."¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁴⁷ Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 95.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 577.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel* 21–37, 577.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Saur, "Ezekiel 26-28," 218.

¹⁰⁵¹ Saur, "Ezekiel 26-28," 218.

¹⁰⁵² Saur, "Ezekiel 26-28," 218.

¹⁰⁵³ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 144–58; Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 162.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 148.

Interpreters have also considered the influence of the Canaanite mythological texts on Ezek 28.¹⁰⁵⁵ First of all, v. 3 describes the Tyrian king as wiser than Danel, who appears in the story of Aqhat in the Ugaritic literature (cf. Ezek 14:20).¹⁰⁵⁶ In v. 3, the *ketiv* reading of the MT indicates Danel (דַּנְאֵל) in the story of Aqhat rather than the biblical figure Daniel in the *qere* reading of the MT. In the story of Aqhat, Danel was initially childless. But when Danel supplicates the gods, he could have a son Aqhat. But due to Anat's jealousy of Aqhat's precious bow, Aqhat was killed by her attendant Yatpan in the form of a vulture. However, Danel went to the vulture and retrieved his son Aqhat with the support of Baal. Although the last ending part is lost, John Day argues that Aqhat was resurrected.¹⁰⁵⁷ The Ugaritic specialists also translate "I am a god (appellative)" in 28:2 as "I am El (the head of the Ugaritic pantheon)." Marvin H. Pope proposes that "the allegory of the downfall of the Prince of Tyre is the fate of El rather than of some lesser deity supposedly designated here as a cherub."¹⁰⁵⁸ For Pope, the Hebrew phrase בְּלֶב יַם "in the heart of the seas" (v.2, 8) is related to El's abode who dwells in watery environs.¹⁰⁵⁹ Indeed, according to KTU 1.2. III line 4-5, El dwells "at the springs of the [Double Rivers,] [Amidst the channels of the Double-Deeps.]"¹⁰⁶⁰ In the Ugaritic text, El is deposed by Baal and goes to the netherworld.¹⁰⁶¹ Likewise, in v. 8, the Tyrian king will be deposed by strangers and

¹⁰⁵⁵ Marvin H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 82–104; Kalman Yaron, "The Dirge over the King of Tyre," *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute* 3 (1964): 28–57; Hugh R. Page, *The Myth of Cosmic Rebellion: A Study of Its Reflexes in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 140–58.

¹⁰⁵⁶ KTU 1.17-19; ANET 149–55. See also DDD, 219–20.

¹⁰⁵⁷ John Day, "The Daniel of Ugarit and Ezekiel and the Hero of the Book of Daniel," VT 30 (1980): 179.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Pope, *El*, 98.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Pope, *El*, 98.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Mark S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2*, vol. 1, VTSup 55 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 218.

¹⁰⁶¹ Pope, *El*, 97.

go down to the Pit. He also argues that the Hebrew noun כֶּרֶמֶת “emerald” is reminiscent of the wondrous *abn brq* of Baal’s abode, since Baal’s house on Mount Zaphon was made of silver and gold, lapis lazuli, and other kinds of precious stones.¹⁰⁶² Similarly, Kalman Yaron argues that El is used to designate the father of the gods in the Phoenician pantheon in v. 2 and a Phoenician tradition may have come to Israel through Canaan.¹⁰⁶³ Hugh R. Page also admits the influence of the Ugaritic god El on Ezek 28:2, but insists that “the Tyrian king would, in fact, be the earthly counterpart to one of the children of El.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Furthermore, although Ezek 28:3 portrays the Tyrian god as wiser than the Danel in the story of Aqhat, Page points out that “there is no record in Ugaritic myth of a wise and proud contender actively vying for El’s throne.”¹⁰⁶⁵ Thus, he argues that although the Ugaritic El became the background for understanding the oracle against the Tyrian king, we should bear in mind that Ezek 28 reflects the Tyrian king’s divine hubris against YHWH.¹⁰⁶⁶ His suggestion is persuasive. Rather than simply following Marvin Pope’s suggestion that the Tyrian king is El, Page argues that Ezekiel criticizes the Tyrian king with his well-known Canaanite mythological texts. Block also criticizes Pope’s suggestion with several arguments. He argues that “although El may have been the head of the pantheon in 2nd millennium BCE. Ugarit, the patron deity of Tyre was Melkart, also known as Baal Shamem.”¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶² Pope, *El*, 99–100.

¹⁰⁶³ Yaron, “King of Tyre,” 48.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Page, *Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 142.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Page, *Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 144.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Page, *Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 146.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 95.

In addition to the divine kingship in the Tyrian ruler and the influence of the Ugaritic mythological texts on Ezek 28, there is another issue regarding a cherub in v. 14a and v. 16b. Many critics have difficulty in translating v. 14 and v. 16b, since the MT reading is different from the LXX reading. The MT reading prefers to identify the Tyrian king with a cherub. By contrast, the LXX reading echoes the primeval man with a cherub in the Garden of Eden in Gen 2–3. Especially, scholars who would like to connect the Tyrian king in 28:11-19 with the primeval man in Gen 2–3 prefer the LXX reading.¹⁰⁶⁸ The following tables show different translations of v. 14 and v. 16b:

Table 1 – Translations of 28:14

v. 14 of the MT אַתְּ־כְרוּב מְמַשַּׁח הַסּוֹכֶה וְנִתְּיָךְ בְּהָר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים הָיִיתָ בְּתוֹךְ אֲבְנֵי־אֵשׁ הַתְּהַלֵּכֶתָ: <i>You</i> (second feminine singular) are a cherub with outstretched shielding and I set you on the holy mountain of God; You were in the midst of the stones of fire. You walked about.
v. 14 of The LXX translation μετὰ τοῦ χειρουβ ἔθηκά σε <i>With</i> a chrub, I placed you on the holy mountain of God. You were in the midst of the stones of fire.

Table 2 – Translations of 28:16b

v.16b of the BHS וְאַחֲלִלְךָ מֵהָר אֱלֹהִים וְאַבְדְּךָ כְּרוּב הַסֹּכֶה מִתּוֹךְ אֲבְנֵי־אֵשׁ: And I <i>profaned</i> (חָלַל) you from the mountain of God and I <i>destroyed</i> you, Shielding cherub, from among the fiery stones.
v. 16b of The LXX translation

¹⁰⁶⁸ Yaron, “King of Tyre,” 31; Norman C. Habel, “Ezekiel 28 and the Fall of the First Man,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38 (1967): 522; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 389; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 85; Wilson, “The Death of the King of Tyre: The Editorial History of Ezekiel 28,” 215; Dexter E. Callender, *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 109; Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 479.

καὶ ἐτραυματίσθης ἀπὸ ὄρους τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἤγαγέν σε τὸ χερουβ ἐκ μέσου λίθων πυρίνων

And you have been cast down wounded from the mount of God, and *the cherub* has brought you out of the midst of the stones of fire.

In the MT reading of v. 14, the Hebrew pronoun **אַתָּה** “you” is the second feminine singular pronoun form. According to the Masorah parva, the Hebrew pronoun second feminine singular pronoun form **אַתָּה** “you” occurs three times in the form of second masculine singular in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Num 11:15; Deut 5:27; Ezek 28:14.). BDB offers three more examples: Gen 12:11, 13; 24:23.¹⁰⁶⁹ However, in v. 15a, the subject is the Hebrew pronoun **אַתָּה** “you” in the form of second masculine singular: “You (**אַתָּה**) were blameless in your ways from the day that you were created.” For this reason, Block insists that “the first word, *’t*, was misvocalized by the Masoretes as a feminine pronoun because of the absence of the final vowel letter.”¹⁰⁷⁰ But as James Barr recognizes that Jerome’s translation ‘tu cherub’ follows the MT reading, he argues that the MT reading has its own peculiarity.¹⁰⁷¹ In the LXX reading of v. 14, the LXX renders the Hebrew pronoun **אַתָּה** “you” as the Hebrew preposition **אִתְּךָ** “with.” It refuses the identity of the Tyrian king as a cherub. Rather, the Tyrian king was with the cherub on the holy mount of God. It seems that the LXX reading knows the story of the primeval man in Gen 2–3. Thus, the LXX reading identifies the Tyrian king as Adam with a cherub.

¹⁰⁶⁹ James Barr, “‘Thou Art the Cherub’: Ezekiel 28.14 and the Post-Ezekiel Understanding of Genesis 2–3,” in *Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp*, ed. Eugene Ulrich et al. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 216. BDB, 61.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 113.

¹⁰⁷¹ Barr, “Thou Art the Cherub,” 218.

In v. 16b, the MT reading is also different from the LXX reading. The MT reading of v. 16b indicates that YHWH Himself profaned the Tyrian king and destroyed him as a shielding cherub from among the fiery stones. Interpreters often found the ambiguity of the Hebrew phrase *וְאַכְדֵּךְ כְּרִיב הַפִּכֵּךְ*. Without vowels, the subject of the Hebrew verb *אָכַד* “destroy or perish” would be a shielding cherub. In other words, the transition of the Hebrew phrase would be “and a shielding cherub destroys you.” On the other hand, with vowels, the subject of the Hebrew verb *אָכַדְךָ* “destroy or perish” is the first common singular. BDB notes it as the piel waw consecutive imperfect first common singular with pronominal second masculine singular suffix.¹⁰⁷² In my view, BDB’s parsing is correct because the Hebrew verb *אֶחְלֵלְךָ* “I will profane (or defile)” at the beginning of v. 16 is the piel waw consecutive imperfect first common singular with pronominal second masculine singular suffix. By contrast, the subject is a cherub in the LXX reading of v. 16b. The LXX reads this part as *καὶ ἡγαγέν σε* “and a cherub brought you out.” In Gen 3:24, after he expelled Adam, YHWH placed cherubim to guard the tree of life at the east of the Garden of Eden. According to the Genesis story, cherubim are not sinners, but guardians for the tree of life. For this reason, While Norman C. Habel compares Ezek 28 with the fall of the primeval man in Gen 2–3, he follows the LXX reading.¹⁰⁷³ However, there are different elements between Ezek 28 and Gen 2–3. As Habel admits, the snake, the woman, and the trees are absent in Ezek 28.¹⁰⁷⁴ Moreover, while YHWH places cherubim (masculine plural form) to guard the tree of life in Gen 2–3, a singular cherub appears in Ezek 28.

¹⁰⁷² BDB, 1–2.

¹⁰⁷³ Habel, “Ezekiel 28,” 522.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Habel, “Ezekiel 28,” 522.

As Robert Wilson follows the LXX reading, he identifies the Tyrian king with a high priest in the Jerusalem temple.¹⁰⁷⁵ Having discovered that Ezekiel speaks of a single cherub when he describes his visions of the Jerusalem temple (Ezek 9:3; 10:2, 4, 7, 14), Wilson suggests that the Sitz im Leben of Ezek 28:14 is the temple setting.¹⁰⁷⁶ For Wilson, vv. 11–19 deals with the high priest with a cherub in the temple. Wilson also argues that the cherub as YHWH’s guardian from the temple executes His judgment on the city.¹⁰⁷⁷ To vindicate his argument that the Tyrian king would be a high priest, Wilson proposes three examples in Ezek 28:11–19. First, the list of gems in v. 13 alludes to the jeweled breastplate by the Israelite high priest (Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13). He recognizes that the LXX reading of v. 13 preserves the twelve stones for the breastplate for the high priest, although the MT reading of v. 13 retains nine stones among the twelve stones. In contrast to some scholars’ argument that the Phoenician kings also wore the jeweled breastplates, Wilson argues that the list of stones of v. 13 is intended “as an explicit reference to the priestly breastplate.”¹⁰⁷⁸ Second, the Tyrian king as הוֹתֵם תְּכָנִית “sealer of proportion (or perfection)” in v. 12 is a description of a priest. As Wilson relies on the LXX reading of ἀποσφράγισμα ὁμοιώσεως “a seal of resemblance” in v.12, he recognizes that the Hebrew noun סֵדֶן “a seal or signet” is used for king Jehoiakin and Zerubbabel in the Hebrew Bible (Jer 22:24; Hag 2:23). It symbolizes that “Yahweh uses kings to exercise his royal power just as an earthly official uses a seal to give authority to his commands.”¹⁰⁷⁹ For Wilson, “the notion that a human being can be an authentic representative of Yahweh’s power can apply to

¹⁰⁷⁵ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 215.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 216.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 216.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 214.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 215.

priests as well as kings.”¹⁰⁸⁰ Third, Eden, the garden of God in v. 13 is the Jerusalem temple on Mount Zion. Wilson argues that “the garden of God is synonymous with the temple in which the high priest exercised his authority.”¹⁰⁸¹

Although Wilson’s argument is cogent in that Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest describes the Tyrian king from his priestly perspective, his suggestions have some flaws. First, Wilson relied too much on the LXX reading of Ezek 28. Many critics agree that the LXX reading of Ezek 28:13 refers to the twelve stones of the breastplate for the high priest (Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13).¹⁰⁸² Block also offers a comparison table of the gemstones in Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13 and Ezek 28:13 in detail.¹⁰⁸³ Like other scholars, Wilson argues that “in the LXX of Ezek 28:13 all twelve stones are mentioned in the same order in which they appear in Exodus.” However, scholars failed to notice that the LXX reading of Exod 28:17–20 and 39:10–13 is different from the LXX reading of Ezek 28:13 as well.

Table 3 – the precious stones for the breastplate for the high priest and the king’s garments

The MT reading of Exod 28:17-20; 39:10-13	
1. חֶסֶד Carnelian, 2. חֲרֹשֶׁת Chrysolite, 3. יָחֶלֶם Amethyst	
4. נִזְהָר Turquoise, 5. סַפִּיר Sapphire, 6. יָחֶלֶם Amethyst	
7. יָסָפִיר Jacinth, 8. אֶגֶרֶט Agate, 9. כֹּחַלִּית Crystal	
10. בִּרְזִיט Beryl, 11. חֹמֶט Onyx, 12. יָסָפִיר Jasper	
The LXX reading of Exod 28:17-20; 36:17-21 (MT 39:10-13)	
1. σάρδιον Carnelian, 2. τοπάζιον Topaz, 3. σμάραγδον Emerald	
4. ἄνθρακας Carbuncle, 5. σάπφειρον Sapphire, 6. ἱάσπιν Jasper	
7. λιγύριον Ligure, 8. ἀγάτην Agate, 9. ἀμέθυστον Amethyst	
10. χρυσόλιθον Chrysolite, 11. βηρύλλιον Beryl , 12. ὀνύχιον Onyx	
The MT reading of Ezek 28:13	
1. חֶסֶד Carnelian, 2. חֲרֹשֶׁת Chrysolite, 3. יָחֶלֶם Amethyst	
4. בִּרְזִיט beryl, 5. חֹמֶט Onyx, 6. יָסָפִיר Jasper	

¹⁰⁸⁰ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 215.

¹⁰⁸¹ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 215.

¹⁰⁸² Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 92; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 106–10.

¹⁰⁸³ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 107.

7. ספיר Sapphire, 8. נִזְקָה Turquoise, 9. בִּרְקָת Emerald
The LXX reading of Ezek 28:13
1. σάρδιον Carnelian, 2. τοπάzion Topaz, 3. σμάραγδον Emerald
4. ἄνθρακα Carbuncle, 5. σάπφειρον Sapphire, 6. ἱάσπιν Jasper
7. ἀργύριον Silver, 8. χρυσίον Gold, 9. λιγύριον Ligure
10. ἀγάτην Agate, 11. ἀμέθυστον Amethyst, 12. χρυσόλιθον Chrysolite

The LXX of Ezek 28:13 follows the first row and the second row lists of the twelve gem stones in the LXX of Exod 28:17–20 and 36:17–21. But in the third row of Ezek 28:13, the LXX adds two stones: ἀργύριον Silver and χρυσίον Gold. On the other hand, in the fourth row of Exod 28:17–20 and 36:17–21, the LXX adds two stones in the last part: βηρύλλιον Beryl and ὀνύχιον Onyx. This indicates that the LXX reading of Ezek 28:13 preserves a different tradition of the twelve stones. Second, as Block points out, the oracle in Ezek 28 is YHWH’s judgment against the Tyrian king rather than His judgment against the Jerusalem temple. In contrast to Wilson’s argument that the Tyrian king symbolizes a high priest in the Jerusalem temple, Block argues that “the final verses of the present chapter intend for the prophecies against the nations to be interpreted as positive messages for Israel/Judah.”¹⁰⁸⁴ Thus, he further insists that Wilson’s interpretation is possible only when 28:11–19 is placed after chapter 11 rather than within the oracles against the foreign nation.¹⁰⁸⁵

With respect to the Tyrian king as a cherub in Ezek 28, scholars have also debated its meaning in Ezek 28.¹⁰⁸⁶ In the Hebrew Bible, the Hebrew noun “cherub” occurs 93 times and

¹⁰⁸⁴ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 112.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 112.

¹⁰⁸⁶ William F. Albright, “What Were the Cherubim?,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 1 (1938): 1–3; James E. Miller, “The Mælak of Tyre (Ezekiel 28,11-19),” *ZAW* 105, no. 3 (1993): 497–501; Dale F. Launderville, “Ezekiel’s Cherub: A Promising Symbol or a Dangerous Idol?,” *CBQ* 65 (2003): 165–83; Raanan Eichler, “Cherub: A History of Interpretation,” *Bib* 96 (2015): 26–38; Lydia Lee, “‘You Were the (Divine) Cherub’: A Potential Challenge to YHWH’s Sole Divinity in Ezekiel 28:14,” *JSOT* 41 (2016): 99–116.

generally appears as the Hebrew plural form כְּרוּבִים or כְּרָבִים.¹⁰⁸⁷ Most scholars agree that cherub as a composite being with human and animal characteristics appears in the form of a winged creature.¹⁰⁸⁸ Dale F. Laundervill notes three distinctive roles of cherub as follows:

It was a winged creature, either a biped or a quadruped, that had three distinctive roles: (1) to guard the source of life (Gen 3:24); (2) to draw the chariot of God (Ps 18:11 = 2 Sam 22:11; Ezek 1:5–20; 10:1–22); and (3) to serve as the throne for God (1 Kgs 6:23–28; 8:6–8).¹⁰⁸⁹

As Laundervill summarizes the role of the cherub above, the cherub as a winged creature functions as a guardian for YHWH. Indeed, in the Hebrew Bible, cherubim with wings cover the tabernacle or the inner sanctuary of the temple, which symbolizes their role as guardians for YHWH. In Gen 3:24, after he expelled Adam, YHWH placed cherubim to guard the tree of life at the east of the Garden of Eden. In Exod 25:18–20, two cherubim of gold with wings appear over the ark and cover it with their wings in the Tabernacle. In 1 Kgs 6:23–28, two cherubim of olivewood with two wings were placed in the inner sanctuary of the temple and each wing touched the wall of the innermost room of the temple. For this reason, recently Lydia Lee argue that “the cherubim represent the divine presence, since the God of Israel is often designated as ‘he who dwells among the cherubim’ (יֹשֵׁב הַכְּרָבִים)” (1 Sam 4:4; 2Sam 6:2; 2 Kgs 19:15; 1 Chr 13:6; Ps 80:1; 99:1; Isa 37:16).¹⁰⁹⁰

¹⁰⁸⁷ Eichler, “Cherub,” 26.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Launderville, “Ezekiel’s Cherub,” 167; Eichler, “Cherub,” 26.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Launderville, “Ezekiel’s Cherub,” 167.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Eichler, “Cherub,” 35; Lee, “Cherub,” 109.

If the cherubim functioned as guardians or representatives for YHWH, why does Ezekiel designate the Tyrian king as a cherub in the Garden of Eden? Archaeological evidence has shown the relationship between the Tyrian king's throne and the cherubim. Based upon archaeological discoveries, W. F. Albright argues that the cherub is "the winged sphinx or winged lion with human head."¹⁰⁹¹ He found that while the wingless sphinx and the griffin appear in Egypt, the winged bull with a human head prevails in Babylonia and Egypt.¹⁰⁹² He also discovered that a winged sphinx is dominant in art and religious symbolism in Syrian and Palestine.¹⁰⁹³ Albright argues that YHWH's enthronement on the cherubim is well illustrated "by representations of a king seated on a throne supported on each side by cherubim, which have been found at Byblus, Hamath, and Megiddo, all dating between 1200 and 800 BCE."¹⁰⁹⁴ Of particular importance is that king Hiram of Byblus is seated upon his cherub throne. This indicates that YHWH's enthronement on the cherubim is influenced by Phoenicians. Indeed, YHWH rode upon a cherub (cherubim in LXX reading) and flew on the wings of the wind in 2 Sam 22:11 and Psalm 18:11 (LXX: Psalm 17:11). Maria Eugenia Aubet argues that while the kings of Tyre used the worship of Melqart for his political ends and propaganda, they set themselves as priests and cherubim.¹⁰⁹⁵ Based upon winged sphinx or cherubim in a Phoenician ivory from the Nimrud palace, Aubet assumes that the Tyrian king identified himself as a cherub with the support of the power of Melqart and his temple.¹⁰⁹⁶ If Maria Eugenia Aubet's argument

¹⁰⁹¹ Albright, "Cherubim," 2.

¹⁰⁹² Albright, "Cherubim," 2.

¹⁰⁹³ Albright, "Cherubim," 2.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Albright, "Cherubim," 2.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 150–55.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 150.

is correct, Ezekiel not only criticizes the Tyrian king's self-deification in vv. 1–10, but also his priestly role as a cherub for Melqart.

5.5.5. Intention

In this intention section, I will argue that from his priestly perspective, Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar through the image of the Tyrian king in Ezek 28:1–19. As we discussed above, biblical scholars have analyzed the Canaanite mythological texts to understand the self-deification of the Tyrian prince as El in Ezek 28:1–10. They have also relied on the LXX reading of Ezek 28:11–19 in order to compare the primeval story of Gen 2–3 with the Tyrian king with a cherub in the Garden of Eden or on the holy mountain of God. But as John van Seters points out, although the story of the Ugaritic pantheon god El's deposition from his abode the Tyrian in the Canaanite mythological texts has shed light on the understanding of the prince's self-deification and his downfall in vv. 1–10, "that is quite different from the creation myth of 28:12–19."¹⁰⁹⁷ Furthermore, Hugh Rowland Page also asserts that "there is no record in Ugaritic myth of a wise and proud contender actively vying for El's throne."¹⁰⁹⁸ Rather, the Baal cycle reflects that Athtar as a wise god attempts to usurp Baal's dwelling on Mount Zaphon.¹⁰⁹⁹ When we read Ezek 28:1–19 as a literary unity from the context of the Babylonian Exile, it is assumable that Ezekiel uses mythological texts for the Tyrian king as hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In what follows, in contrast to Frankfort and

¹⁰⁹⁷ John Van Seters, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King," ZAW 101 (1989): 336.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Page, *Myth of Cosmic Rebellion*, 144.

¹⁰⁹⁹ KTU 1.24, See Smith, *Ugaritic Baal Cycle*, 242–43; John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 110.

Hallo's analysis of the absence of divine kingship in Mesopotamia, I will examine how Mesopotamian rulers were treated as if they were born of the gods. It seems that the Tyrian king's self-deification reflects Mesopotamian rulers' self-deification. I will introduce Irene J. Winter's recent study of the divine status of rulers in Mesopotamia.¹¹⁰⁰ Next, I will examine how the image of the Tyrian prince's hubris alludes to the image of Nebuchadnezzar in 28:1–10. Finally, I will analyze how Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest describes the Tyrian king from his priestly perspective. I will further examine how Ezekiel appropriates the Neo-Babylonian mythical texts to criticize Nebuchadnezzar behind the image of the Tyrian king in 28:11–19. John Van Seters suggests that the creation of king in 28:11–19 is influenced by the tradition of Atrahasis.¹¹⁰¹ He also argues that the primeval iniquity of the king also alludes to the king's negative confession of sin in the presence of the high priest in the Babylonian New Year Festival.¹¹⁰² Although the Babylonian myth does not depict the excommunication of their king from the palace, Ezekiel uses his own judgment announcement against the Tyrian king. Behind the image of the Tyrian king, Ezekiel announces his judgment against Nebuchadnezzar: YHWH used Nebuchadnezzar as a cherub but will expel him out of Babylon.

Mesopotamian kings constantly maintained their divine kingship as the god's representatives on earth, even if kings themselves were not deified explicitly. Many commentators who explain the divine kingship in Ezek 28 refer to Frankfort's *Kingship and the*

¹¹⁰⁰ Irene J. Winter, "Touched by the Gods: Visual Evidence for the Divine Status of Rulers in the Ancient Near East," in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Nicole M. Brisch (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), 75–101.

¹¹⁰¹ Van Seters, *Creation of Man*, 339.

¹¹⁰² Van Seters, *Creation of Man*, 339; Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 93–103.

Gods.¹¹⁰³ As we discussed in the genre section, building upon Frankfort's argument that while Egyptians considered their king to be a god, Babylonian and Persian rulers did not deify themselves,¹¹⁰⁴ they insist that the Tyrian king's claim to be a god is influenced by Egyptians. Similarly, William W. Hallo has argued that the divine kingship of Egypt had a limited appeal in Mesopotamia, "but for some five hundred years of its long history it prevailed there from about 2250 to 1750 BCE."¹¹⁰⁵ By contrast, more recently, Irene J. Winter argues that "Mesopotamian kingship was consistently treated as if infused by the divine, 'sacral kingship' being the constant in which all rulers participated."¹¹⁰⁶ Having analyzed the Assyrian rulers' royal texts, Winter observes that those texts report the god-like properties and resemblances of images of the ruler.¹¹⁰⁷ For example, in the letters to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669 BCE), the Assyrian king is depicted as the "perfect likeness of the god," "the very image of Bel (Marduk)."¹¹⁰⁸ Above all, Winter observes that "the Assyrian king is said to be possessed of the divine attribute, *melammu*, a radiant and powerful aura."¹¹⁰⁹ The image of the Assyrian king evokes the epithet of the Tyrian king in Ezek 28:12. Ezekiel describes the Tyrian king with the

¹¹⁰³ Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society & Nature*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948); Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 78; Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 95.

¹¹⁰⁴ Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, 106.

¹¹⁰⁵ William W. Hallo, *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 152.

¹¹⁰⁶ Winter, "Touched by the Gods," 88.

¹¹⁰⁷ Winter, "Touched by the Gods," 85–86.

¹¹⁰⁸ Winter, "Touched by the Gods," 85.

¹¹⁰⁹ Winter, "Touched by the Gods," 85. Oppenheim explains that *melammu* functioned as the radiance that surrounds the sacred but was also given to the king. See Adolf L. Oppenheim, "Akkadian 'Pul(u)h(t)u' and 'Melammu,'" *JAOS* 63 (1943): 31. With regard to the relationship between *melammu* and *Kebod* YHWH, Shawn Zelig Aster argues that Ezekiel adapted Mesopotamian *Melammu* for the description of radiance in Ezek 1:27–28. See Shawn Z. Aster, "Ezekiel's Adaptation of Mesopotamian 'Melammu,'" *Die Welt Des Orients* 45 (2015): 10–21.

Hebrew phrase חֹתֶם תְּכַנִּית “a sealer of proportion” in v. 12. The Hebrew word חֹתֶם “a sealer” is the qal participle masculine singular form of the Hebrew verb חָתַם “to seal.”¹¹¹⁰ According to the BHS critical apparatus, some manuscripts, LXX, Aquila, Syriac, and Vulgate versions render it as חָתֵם “signet.” The Hebrew word תְּכַנִּית “measurement or proportion” occurs in Ezek 28:12 and 43:10. In Ezek 43:10, it is used for the design of the Temple. BDB explains that it exhibits perfect proportion.¹¹¹¹ Thus, it is possible that the Hebrew phrase of v. 12 can be rendered as “signet of perfection.” As aforementioned, the Hebrew noun חָתֵם “a seal or signet” is used for king Jehoiakin and Zerubbabel in the Hebrew Bible (Jer 22:24; Hag 2:23). It symbolizes that “Yahweh uses kings to exercise his royal power just as an earthly official uses a seal to give authority to his commands.”¹¹¹² Sweeney also argues that a “signet of perfection” reflects “Mesopotamian traditions that posited the king as the ideal representation of the ideal human king was to raise the level of human life to that of the gods.”¹¹¹³

In this regard, in the first major section (28:1–10), when Ezekiel describes the Tyrian king as self-deifying, he is obliquely criticizing Nebuchadrezzar’s self-deification. In vv. 1–5, the Tyrian king not only announces himself as a god (v. 2), he also boasts of his wisdom (v. 3). In the heart of the seas, the Tyrian king achieved his wealth through his wisdom and trade in v. 5. In trying to depict the image of the Tyrian king, Ezekiel reiterates several Hebrew words: 1) the Hebrew noun חָכְמָה “wisdom” (vv. 4, 5, 7, 12, 17) and the Hebrew adjective חָכָם “wise” (v. 3); 2) the Hebrew noun יָפִי “beauty” (vv. 7, 12, 17); 3) the Hebrew noun יָפָא “splendor” (vv. 7, 17); 4)

¹¹¹⁰ BDB, 367.

¹¹¹¹ BDB, 1067. The BHS critical apparatus indicates that many manuscripts, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate versions render it as תְּכַנִּית “likeness.”

¹¹¹² Ibid., 215.

¹¹¹³ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 140; Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 214.

the Hebrew noun רִכְלָה “trade” (vv. 5, 16, 18); 5) the Hebrew חֵיל “wealth” (vv. 4, 5(2x)) and 6) the Hebrew noun לֵב “heart” (vv. 2(4x), 6, 8, 17). These words evoke king Nebuchadnezzar’s building projects for the temple of Marduk. As I mentioned in the intention section of Ezek 27, according to Herodotus, “Babylon...is surrounded by a broad deep moat full of water.”¹¹¹⁴ The Tyrian king’s place in the heart of seas or in the heart of waters (v. 2, 8) alludes to king Nebuchadnezzar’s temple and palace in Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar’s primary building project was the beautiful temple of Marduk, Esagila, in Bablyon. Ronald Herbert Sack notes his building projects as follows:

Nebuchadnezzar was the vicar of Marduk on earth; his capital city had to be fortified and beautified in accordance with his god's will. Because of the extent of the campaigns against Judah, Phoenicia, and Egypt, these building projects required several years to complete. The results of these efforts, however, were impressive. They served as adequate praise of the “king of the gods” and immortalized Nebuchadnezzar (albeit in abstract form) in the histories of Herodotus and his classical contemporaries.¹¹¹⁵

Above all, for Mesopotamians, Nebuchadnezzar’s building projects for Marduk also connoted human imitation of the divine wisdom. As Raymond C. Van Leeuwen argues that “in Mesopotamia, building was a matter of divine command and agency and of human imitation of the divine wisdom in building,”¹¹¹⁶ he refers to the Assyrian inscriptions as follows:

In Assyria, all elements of the wisdom-building-provisioning topos are already present in the Middle Assyrian inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BCE.). He writes, “That

¹¹¹⁴ Van de Mieroop, “Reading Babylon,” 262.

¹¹¹⁵ Ronald H. Sack, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar: The Emergence of a Legend* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2004), 64.

¹¹¹⁶ Raymond C. Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House : Building and Wisdom in Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel,” in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. Richard J. Clifford, SBLSymS 36 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 74.

cedar palace I built with understanding and skill (and) called it Egallugalsharrakurkurra, ‘Palace of the King of All [Lands].’ Assurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE.), in the famous Banquet Stele cited above, declares, “with the cunning (*ina hi-sa-at lib-bi-ia*) which the god Ea, king of the Abzu, extensively wise (*uz-nu rapaštu [tu]*), gave to me, the city Kalach I took in hand for renovations... I founded therein a palace...” He goes on to talk of his water works (the “Canal of Abundance”) and the orchards he planted. In a description of the dedication feast of the palace, which is unique in Assyrian royal inscriptions, he calls it “the palace full of wisdom.”¹¹¹⁷

Indeed, according to Nebuchadrezzar’s Wadi Brisa inscription, Nebuchadrezzar proclaims his accomplishment of building for the Ezida temple of Nabû as a form of royal self-promotion: “What no earlier king has done, I did in a grand way for Nabu my lord” (VAB 4 158 [Nbk 19 = Wâdi-Brîsa] vi 51–53).¹¹¹⁸ More importantly, in a legal text, Nebuchadrezzar was described as the sun-god in the following way:

Baba-aha-iddina, son of Nabu-ahhe-built, descendant of ...-limmir, caused sin and crime and planned evil. The oaths of the king, his lord, he did not keep, but planned treason. In those day, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the judicious prince, shepherd of the widespread people, who *like the sun-god* oversees the totality of the lands, who determines right and justice, who destroys evildoers and criminals, examined the evil deeds of Baba-aha-iddina and brought his conspiracy to naught.¹¹¹⁹

However, any kings who boast their divine kingship and wisdom cannot avoid YHWH’s judgment in vv. 6–10. In v. 10, Ezekiel announces that the Tyrian king will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hands of strangers. While Ezekiel describes Nebuchadrezzar and his army’s attack against Tyre in Ezek 26:7–14, he introduces terrifying strangers against the Tyrian

¹¹¹⁷ Van Leeuwen, “Cosmos, Temple, House,” 74.

¹¹¹⁸ Cited from Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 172.

¹¹¹⁹ Amélie Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East c. 3000-330 BC*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 1995), 595.

king in 28:6–10. On the surface, the Babylonians will bring YHWH’s judgment against the Tyrian king. In v. 10, the Tyrian king will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hands of strangers. With regard to circumcision in the ancient Near East, Jack M. Sasson notes that “circumcision was at home in Egypt from the earliest times, and from there it was adopted by the Israelites and by the Phoenicians.”¹¹²⁰ Many critics agree that since the Phoenicians practice circumcision, the death of the uncircumcised would be insulting to them.¹¹²¹ On the other hand, behind the surface structure of vv. 6–10, Ezekiel accentuates that YHWH’s judgment message can be applied to any royal figures who boast of divine kingship and wisdom. When Madhavi Nevader argues that “Ezekiel’s oracles against the Nation should be read as part of a wider enterprise in the book to dismantle royal legitimacy,” she proposes that the prototypical wise monarch in Ezekiel 28 is derisively banished to the underworld, “tumbling both as individual and as archetype from a throne ideologically compromised.”¹¹²² Nevader insists that by subverting the prototypical wise monarch, Ezekiel denounces the royal institution and its accompanying mythology.¹¹²³ Indeed, Ezekiel negates the Tyrian king’s self-deification “I am a god” (v. 2) with the rhetorical question in v. 9: “Will you still say, “I am a god” before your slayer? You are a man (Adam) and no god in the hand of those who wound you.” The destiny of the prototypical wise monarch will be the destiny of Nebuchadnezzar as well. Nebuchadnezzar’s royal self-promotion in the Ezida temple is a dominant transcript of hierarchy.¹¹²⁴ His dwelling place is in

¹¹²⁰ Jack M. Sasson, “Circumcision in the Ancient Near East,” *JBL* 85 (1966): 473.

¹¹²¹ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 576; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 99.

¹¹²² Madhavi Nevader, “YHWH and the Kings of Middle Earth: Royal Polemic in Ezekiel’s Oracles against the Nations,” in *Concerning the Nations: Essays on the Oracles against the Nations in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel*, ed. Else K. Holt, Hyun Chul Paul Kim, and Andrew Mein (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 167.

¹¹²³ Nevader, “YHWH and the Kings,” 177.

¹¹²⁴ Scott, *Domination*, 172.

the heart of waters (v. 2), which symbolizes Babylon. In response to his public transcript, Ezekiel produces world-upside-down prints as the counterculture in v. 10: “You will die the death of the uncircumcised by the hands of strangers.”¹¹²⁵ Lawrence Boadt proposes that since עָרְלִים “uncircumcised” may reflect Akkadian *arallu*, the pun between עָרְלִים and *arallu*, “Underworld,” is known to the prophet.¹¹²⁶ In other words, although Nebuchadrezzar boasts of his beautiful buildings in Babylon in v. 2, his destiny will be the death of the underworld in v. 10.

The second major section (vv. 11–19) presents Ezekiel’s dirge over the Tyrian king, in which from the priestly perspective, Ezekiel depicts the Tyrian king as a cherub in the Garden of Eden. As Wilson points out, the image of the Tyrian king is depicted as the Israelite high priest in v. 13 (Exod 28:17–20; 39:10–13).¹¹²⁷ Although the MT reading of v.13 preserves the nine stones among the twelve stones for the breastplate of the high priest, the LXX reading preserves the twelve stones. Regarding this issue, Marvin Sweeney assumes that the nine stones represent the lost tribes of the north that came under Tyrian influence after the downfall of the northern kingdom.¹¹²⁸ In the MT reading of vv. 13–14, the Tyrian king is even depicted as a cherub in the Garden of Eden and even dwells on the holy mountain of God. It seems that Ezekiel identifies the Garden of Eden in v. 13 with the holy mountain of God in v. 24. Jon D. Levenson argues that “in Ezekiel and/or his school, the vocabulary of Zaphon/Zion, the Temple mountain, is common to the old myth of the Garden of Eden.”¹¹²⁹ Especially, Levenson has called attention to the

¹¹²⁵ Scott, *Domination*, 172.

¹¹²⁶ Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles*, 123.

¹¹²⁷ Boadt, *Ezekiel’s Oracles*, 214.

¹¹²⁸ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 214.

¹¹²⁹ Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48*, Harvard Semitic Museum Monographs 10 (Atlanta: Scholars Press for Harvard Semitic Museum, 1976), 26.

Hebrew phrase כְּלִילַת יָפִי “perfect in beauty” in v.12, which symbolizes the fame of Jerusalem.¹¹³⁰

Indeed, in Lam 2:15, the city Jerusalem is depicted as כְּלִילַת יָפִי “perfect in beauty, joy of all the earth.” In Ezek 16:14, the beauty (יָפִי) and the splendor (הֶדְר) of Jerusalem is perfected (כְּלִיל) because YHWH bestowed as a gift. Just as Ezekiel associates the Tyrian ship as “perfect in beauty” with the image of Jerusalem (27:3, 4, 11), so he associates the Garden of Eden with the latter. In Ezek 28, the Tyrian king’s beauty is also bestowed as YHWH’s gift.

From Ezekiel’s priestly perspective, it is assumed that the Tyrian king as a cherub functions as a guardian or an executor for YHWH. In the book of Ezekiel, the word cherubim (כְּרֻבִים) in the plural form occurs twenty times and a cherub (כְּרוֹב) in the singular form occurs eleven times (9:3, 10:2, 4, 7, 9, 14; 28:14, 16; 41:18 [3x]). It is significant that Ezekiel typically uses a cherub (כְּרוֹב) in the singular form for an executor in the section concerning YHWH’s departure from the Temple of Jerusalem (8–11), while he uses the plural form cherubim as YHWH’s chariot throne or transport. Of course, the cherub in the singular form also occurs three times in Ezek 41:18. But it describes each of the two cherubs in the Third Temple. In the section of Ezekiel 8–11, the cherub in singular form first occurs in Ezek 9:3. In Ezek 9:3, YHWH who is enthroned above the cherub had risen from it and moved over to the threshold of the temple. Following 9:3, YHWH’s judgment against Jerusalem began. In Ezek 10:2, the cherub in singular form appears again among the four cherubim of the divine chariot along with wheels, which are identified with חַיִּים “living beings” in Ezek 1.¹¹³¹ In 10:2, the cherub among the cherubim fills

¹¹³⁰ Levenson, “*Theology of the Program*,” 26.

¹¹³¹ The four faces of the cherubim in Ezek 10 are different from the four faces of the living beings in Ezek 1. In Ezek 10, the four faces of the cherubim are the face of cherub, the face of human, the face of lion, and the face of eagle. On the other hand, in Ezek 1, the four faces of the cherubim are the face of human, the face of lion, the face of bull, and the face of eagle. For this reason, following a Babylonian talmud’s interpretation, Block notes that “since the bull was associated with the golden calf incident at Sinai (Exod 32), hence a symbol of Israelite sin,

the hands of a man dressed in white linen with coals of fire from between the cherubim and the man scattered the coals over the city. For this reason, Robert Wilson argues that the cherub in the singular form functions as an executor for YHWH's judgment on the city.¹¹³² He even identifies the cherub with the Israelite high priest. Marvin Sweeney also argues that the cherub which echoes the seraph in Isa 6:6–7 functions as an executor to purge the temple and the city of Jerusalem by destroying them together.¹¹³³ Thus, it seems that the Tyrian king as a cherub functions as YHWH's guardian or executor.

However, from his priestly perspective, Ezekiel announces YHWH's judgment against the Tyrian king who defiled his sanctuaries in vv. 15b–19a. Just as Jerusalem as a woman boasts of her beauty and pride in Ezekiel 16, so the Tyrian king boasts of his blamelessness and trade in 28:15b–16a. Just as Jerusalem as Oholibah defiled YHWH's sanctuary in Ezek 23:38, so the Tyrian king defiles his sanctuaries in 28:18. Both Jerusalem and the Tyrian king forgot their beauty, pride, and trade bestowed as YHWH's gift. As Carol Newsom also recognizes this, she argues that “it is not the sea that gives Tyre its access to wealth and magnificence and its special protection from foreign attack.”¹¹³⁴ In particular, from his priestly perspective, Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest announces YHWH's purgation of Jerusalem and the Tyrian king because of their defilement of their sanctuaries. According to Jacob Milgrom, the role of the high priest was to

Ezekiel implored Yahweh for mercy, to which God responded by changing the bull into a cherub.” See Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 324–25.

¹¹³² Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 216.

¹¹³³ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 63–64.

¹¹³⁴ Newsom, “Maker of Metaphors,” 161.

purge the shrine of its impurities caused by Israel's violations or wrongs (cf. Leviticus 16).¹¹³⁵

Likewise, Richard Nelson argues that priests as “boundary setters” should sanctify or purify their sanctuary through rituals to move “something or someone from the realm of the common to the sphere of the holy.”¹¹³⁶ Since Ezekiel was educated as a high priest, his purification of the sanctuary is appropriate. In the MT reading of Ezek 28:16b, Ezekiel announces YHWH's judgment against the Tyrian king: “I profaned (ללן) you from the mountain of God and I destroyed you, shielding cherub, from among the fiery stones.” In a similar way, in 28:18b, Ezekiel also announces that YHWH's fire devoured the Tyrian king and turned him into ashes on the ground. With regard to “the stones of fire” (v. 14, 16, and 18b), Robert Wilson, argues that “the stones of fire are the coals from the altar and as such represent the glowing fire of Yahweh's presence.”¹¹³⁷ It is remarkable that Ezekiel as Zadokite priest announces YHWH's purification against the foreign ruler, the Tyrian king.

While Ezekiel highlights the priestly purification against the Tyrian king as a cherub, he also uses the Mesopotamian mythological texts to criticize Nebuchadrezzar as a cherub. Scholars have suggested that the Hebrew word cherubim is related to the images of Assyrian winged creatures bearing the names Akkadian *kāribu* (a participle form of *karābu* which means “one who prays” or “intercessor”) or *kurūbu* or *karibi*, *kurībi*, *karibāti* (“gatekeepers”).¹¹³⁸ Mariana

¹¹³⁵ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 74.

¹¹³⁶ Richard D. Nelson, *Raising up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 20–21.

¹¹³⁷ Wilson, “King of Tyre,” 216. For a discussion of the stones of fire, see Callender, *Adam in Myth*, 114–15; Launderville, “Ezekiel's Cherub,” 179.

¹¹³⁸ Jennie R. Ebeling, “Cherub/Cherubim,” in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David N. Freedman, Allen C. Myers, and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 233; Mariana Giovino, *The Assyrian Sacred Tree: A History of Interpretations*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 230 (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007), 137–41; Eichler, “Cherub,” 34; Lee, “Cherub,” 111–12.

Giovino explains that the cherubim could be the winged bird-headed genies known as *apkallu* or the Seven Sages, which were depicted on the large-scale wall reliefs of Aššurnasirpal's palace at Nimrud."¹¹³⁹ Building upon August Dillmann's analysis of the griffin, Raanan Eichler identifies the Akkadian word *kurūbu* with the griffin or raptor-headed winged lion.¹¹⁴⁰ As Lydia Lee considers the semi-divine or the divine status of the cherubim, she notes that "in several Esarhaddon inscriptions, the Akkadian word *kurūbu* or *kurūbi* bears the divine determinative, which indicates the figure's deified status."¹¹⁴¹ Jennie R. Eberling also argues that "the mythological winged creatures in Mesopotamia function as guardians which flanked the entrances of Mesopotamian palaces and temples."¹¹⁴² According to Tallay Ornan, Assyrians typically portrayed their ruler with divine emblems on the monuments.¹¹⁴³ She argues that the king before tree combating a lion in Nebuchadnezzar's Wadi Brisa in Syria reflects "two typical Assyrian conventions for portraying the king."¹¹⁴⁴ Indeed, as Dale Launderville notes that "Nebuchadnezzar strategically placed dragon (*mušhuššu*) and lion figures on gates and walls," he introduces two examples as follows:

Babylon, the city of the great lord Marduk, the city of his highest praise, I completed its great walls: Imgur-Enlil and Nimitti-Enlil. On the threshold of their gates, I constructed fierce bronze bulls and raging dragons." (Nebuchadnezzar's inscription for the renovation of the E-ulla temple for Ninkarrak in Sippar, VAB 4 106 [Nbk 13 = Zyl III, 7] I:54–60)

¹¹³⁹ Giovino, *Assyrian Sacred Tree*, 140.

¹¹⁴⁰ Eichler, "Cherub," 34.

¹¹⁴¹ Lee, "Cherub," 112.

¹¹⁴² Jennie R. Eberling, "Cherub/Cherubim," 233.

¹¹⁴³ Tallay Ornan, *The Triumph of the Symbol: Pictorial Representation of Deities in Mesopotamia and the Biblical Image Ban*, *Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis* 213 (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005), 110–11.

¹¹⁴⁴ Ornan, *Triumph of the Symbol*, 111.

On the other side of the water, I laid its foundation with asphalt and bricks; and I artfully adorned it with glistening lapis lazuli bricks with wild bulls and dragons formed upon them. I placed massive bronze bulls and fierce dragons on their thresholds; I filled those gates with splendor in view of all peoples. (The northern section of the Processional Way in a double gate called Ištar-sakipat-tebiša “Ishtar who decimates her enemies” VAB 4 132 [Nbk 15 = Sten Tafel X] vi 1–7, 16–21)¹¹⁴⁵

Tallay Ornan explains that “in Late Babylonian glyptics, *mušḫuššu* usually appears as a mount for the emblems of Marduk and Nabu with a clear apotropaic function.”¹¹⁴⁶ She also notes that “Babylonian art preferred to represent the divine by a symbol rather than by its human shape.”¹¹⁴⁷ It is significant that *mušḫuššu* who bears Marduk evokes Psalm 18:11, where YHWH mounted a cherub. With regard to the origin of *mušḫuššu*, Theodore J. Lewis argues that *mušḫuššu* originated from Tishpak’s battle with the dragon in CT 13.33–34.¹¹⁴⁸ In CT 13.33–34, after Tishpak as a prototype of Marduk defeats *mušḫuššu* “dragon” or “terrifying serpent,” he rides upon the *mušḫuššu*.¹¹⁴⁹ In the depiction of the dragon, *mušḫuššu* is described as the serpent with his two feet and exhibits animal characteristics (ears, tail, catching birds).¹¹⁵⁰ Building upon Wiggermann’s proposal, Lewis argues that the *mušḫuššu* has a double designation, “lion and dragon/serpent.”¹¹⁵¹ It is noteworthy that the *mušḫuššu* was placed in the Ishtar Gate and Processional Way complex, “where the procession of divine statues—headed by Marduk—

¹¹⁴⁵ Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 157.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ornan, *Triumph of the Symbol*, 113.

¹¹⁴⁷ Ornan, *Triumph of the Symbol*, 114.

¹¹⁴⁸ Theodore J. Lewis, “CT 13.33-34 and Ezekiel 32: Lion-Dragon Myths,” *JAOS* 116 (1996): 28–47.

¹¹⁴⁹ Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 29.

¹¹⁵⁰ Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 33–34.

¹¹⁵¹ Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 34.

passed during the *akītu* New Year Festival.”¹¹⁵² Presumably, while the Jews of the Exile including Ezekiel participated in this festival, they could see *mušhuššu*. In this regard, as Lewis also considers that Ezekiel’s literary activity is related to the Babylonian Exile, he notes as follows:

Ezekiel surely drew upon Mesopotamian art and literature to illustrate his work for his audience. The historical background underlying Ezekiel’s literary activity (between 593–571 BCE, to judge from the dates given in the book) falls within the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (604–562 BCE.), whose achievements include the rebuilding of the Ishtar Gate, itself replete with reliefs of the *mušhuššu*-dragon.¹¹⁵³

Thus, it is evident that Nebuchadnezzar functions as the *mušhuššu* dragon in the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:19. As we observed in Ezek 26, YHWH appointed Nebuchadnezzar as YHWH’s instrument against Tyre. He should execute YHWH’s judgment against Tyre. In 28:14a, behind the image of the Tyrian king, Nebuchadnezzar was called a cherub as an executor for YHWH. Just as Marduk rides on the *mušhuššu* as his executor or guardian, YHWH also rides on Nebuchadnezzar as *mušhuššu* against Tyre. However, in 28:18a, Nebuchadnezzar is accused because he defiled his sanctuaries. In my view, the Hebrew phrase “sanctuaries” of v. 18a does not connote Nebuchadnezzar’s sanctuaries but YHWH’s sanctuaries. With regard to Nebuchadnezzar’s pious act for his gods, Hayim Tadmor notes as follows:

The neo-Babylonian empire, short-lived but very effective. The neo-Babylonian emperors, especially the great conqueror Nebuchadnezzar II, left numerous royal inscriptions, mostly clay cylinders of various shapes. Their contents, however, are usually religious. The king describes his pious acts of restoring old temples or building new ones.

¹¹⁵² Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 114.

¹¹⁵³ Lewis, “CT 13.33-34,” 46.

Never do we hear of his conquests, his relations with vassal countries, the quantity of tribute he exacted from them, and so on. Some of these were recorded in another, non-official genre, that of the detailed chronicles which, in style and brevity, are very similar to the early annals of medieval Europe. Had we known Nebuchadnezzar II only from his royal inscriptions, he would have emerged as a pious ruler who did nothing but serve his gods.

It is no doubt that Nebuchadnezzar never defiled his Babylonian sanctuaries. Rather, Nebuchadnezzar as YHWH's *mušhuššu* or cherub defiled YHWH's own sanctuary. Of course, in the book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel announces YHWH's purgation of his sanctuary because the Israelites themselves defiled YHWH's sanctuary (5:11; 8:6; 9:6; 23:38, 39). But in Ezek 7:24, Ezekiel also announces that "I will bring in the worst of the nations to take possession of their houses. I will put an end to the arrogance of the strong and their sanctuaries (מִקְדָּשֵׁיהֶם) shall be defiled (חָלַל)." It is noteworthy that Ezek 7:24 and 28:18 use the plural form of the Hebrew noun מִקְדָּשִׁים "sanctuaries." This indicates that Nebuchadnezzar as YHWH's cherub not only executed His judgment against Jerusalem but also defiled YHWH's sanctuaries as well. Because of his profanation of YHWH's sanctuaries, YHWH will expel him out of the Garden of Eden.

In addition, by using the Babylonian mythological texts and the king's humiliation ritual in the Babylonian New Year Festival, Ezekiel not only depicts the creation of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar but also attempts to show his humiliation. John Van Seters has first suggested that the context of Ezek 28:11–19 can be understood from the Neo-Babylonian mythical text.¹¹⁵⁴ He has found that the tradition of Atrahasis describes the creation of a king, who is quite distinct from the rest of humanity as follows:

¹¹⁵⁴ John Van Seters, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King," ZAW 101 (1989): 337.

Ea began to speak, he directed his word to Belet-ili, Belet-ili, Mistress of the great gods, are you. You have created the common people, now construct the king, distinctively superior persons. With goodness envelop his entire being. Form his features harmoniously; make his body beautiful! Thus did Belet-ili construct the king, distinctively superior persons. The great gods gave the king the task of warfare. Anu gave him the crown; Enlil gave him the throne. Nergal gave him weapons; Ninutta gave him glistening splendor. Belet-ili gave him a beautiful appearance. Nusku gave him instruction and counsel and stands at his service.¹¹⁵⁵

In the text, when Ea and Belet-ili create the king, the great gods also gave the king “various royal attributes of wisdom, strength and beauty.”¹¹⁵⁶ Van Seter interprets this to mean that “the bestowal of physical endowments at birth and the regalia at the coronation have both been combined and then placed mythologically back into the time of creation itself as a way of expressing the inception of kingship.”¹¹⁵⁷ Indeed, when Ezek 28:12 depicts the creation of the Tyrian king, he was “the seal of perfection,” “wise,” and “perfected in beauty.” In v. 15, he was even “blameless in his ways on the day he was created.” For this resemblance, Van Seters argues that “Ezekiel is dependent upon the Babylonian tradition.”¹¹⁵⁸ Of course, there is difference between the Babylonian myth and Ezek 28:11–19, because the Babylonian myth not only excludes the primeval iniquity of the fall of the king from favor, but also omits the setting of the Garden of Eden. Nevertheless, as Van Seter finds the king’s humiliation in the Babylonian akitu Festival, he insists that “in the Babylonian New Year’s festival during which the kingship was renewed the king had to lay aside his insignia and make a negative confession of sin in the

¹¹⁵⁵ Van Seters, “Creation of Man,” 337.

¹¹⁵⁶ Van Seters, “Creation of Man,” 338.

¹¹⁵⁷ Van Seters, “Creation of Man,” 338.

¹¹⁵⁸ Van Seters, “Creation of Man,” 339.

presence of the high priest before he could be invested in office.”¹¹⁵⁹ On the fifth day (Nisannu 5th) of the festival, which lasted the first eleven days of the first month, the Babylonian king performed his humiliation ritual. As Julye Bidmead comprehensively analyzes the Babylonian *akitu* New Year Festival in her dissertation, she notes the humiliation ritual as follows:

The hand-washing ceremony is performed first. After the king washes his hands, presumably in some outer courtyard, the *šešgallu* leaves the cella of Marduk where he has been praying and escorts the king into Nabû’s shrine. It is noted that the king cannot yet enter the cella of Bēl. The so-called humiliation ritual is the next cultic happening. The *šešgallu* strips the king of the symbols of his office by removing his scepter, his circlet, and his mace. He goes back into the cella of Bēl and places them on a seat before the statue. Then he returns to the king and strikes him across the cheek, yanks him by his ears, and leads him into Bēl’s sanctuary. He forces the king to kneel in supplication before the statue of Marduk... The king, ritually deposed and deprived of the symbols of his office, is compelled to make a negative confession before Marduk. After his declaration of innocence, the *šešgallu* speaks on behalf of Marduk, assuring the king of the god’s mercy, support, and unlimited blessings. “Do not fear, Marduk has spoken and heard your prayer.” He assures the king that Marduk will protect him and destroy his enemies. His insignia are returned, and as a concluding act the priest slaps the king’s face once again. The second slap is viewed as an omen to determine Marduk’s disposition toward the king. To be sure, tears would certainly always appear in his eyes, and the festival would continue with the next event. As his insignia are returned he is symbolically restored or reinvested to royal office.¹¹⁶⁰

In the king’s humiliation ceremony, of particular importance is the king’s confession in his prayer before the statue of Marduk. According to Bidmead, the king confesses as follows: “I did not strike the cheek of the privileged citizens; I did not humiliate them (set them to be

¹¹⁵⁹ Van Seters, “Creation of Man,” 339.

¹¹⁶⁰ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 93–95.

small).”¹¹⁶¹ She also observed that the king was prohibited from imposing taxes, dues, or compulsory labor on the Babylonian privileged citizens, so called, the *ṣab kidinni*.¹¹⁶² Thus, Bidmead argues that through the emphasis on the Babylonian privileged citizens in the king’s prayers, the *akitu* festival is to maintain “class distinction and promote political ideology.”¹¹⁶³ Although Ezek 28:11–19 does not include the king’s own confession before YHWH, Ezekiel’s judgment against the king’s sins resembles the Babylonian king’s prayer in the humiliation ritual. For example, in v. 15b–16a, Ezekiel criticizes the Tyrian king’s wrongdoing and violence with the abundance of his trade.

Furthermore, Ezekiel also condemns the Babylonian’s city Babylon as the cosmic center in the Babylonian New Year Festival. The Babylonians built their city Babylon to be the cosmic center as well as the political center. According to Erica Ehrenberg, while the Assyrians separated their imperial cities such as Nineveh and Nimrud from the cult city of Assur, the Babylonians united political and religious functions in the city Babylon.¹¹⁶⁴ For example, based upon the so-called Babylonian world-map tablet, Ehrenberg interprets the map to mean “it depicts a circular world with Bablylon at its center, surrounded by the sea.”¹¹⁶⁵ Ehrenberg also argues that “in the re-enactment of the New Year’s festival, the gods descend on Babylon, thereby rendering it the cosmic center as well as the political center.”¹¹⁶⁶ Their emphasis on the

¹¹⁶¹ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 98.

¹¹⁶² Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 98.

¹¹⁶³ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 6.

¹¹⁶⁴ Erica Ehrenberg, “Dieu et Mon Droit: Kingship in Late Babylonian and Early Persian Times,” in *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, ed. Nicole M. Brisch (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2008), 109.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ehrenberg, “Dieu et Mon Droit,” 113.

¹¹⁶⁶ Ehrenberg, “Dieu et Mon Droit,” 109.

city Babylon as the cosmic center was reflected in the Babylonian New Year Festival. In particular, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world,¹¹⁶⁷ was an example of Nebuchadnezzar's splendor in Babylon as the cosmic center. In the royal park, Nebuchadnezzar planted trees upon the terraced stages of the ziggurat and watered them.¹¹⁶⁸ In this regard, John Van Seters and Dale F. Launderville argue that the Garden of Eden in Ezek 28:13 evokes the Hanging Gardens of Babylon.¹¹⁶⁹ However, Ezekiel resists Nebuchadnezzar's plan for Babylon as the cosmic center. Rather, Ezekiel's cosmic center is the Temple where YHWH dwells. As Jon D. Levenson also considers the Garden of Eden in Ezek 28, he notes as follows:

Is it possible that in Ezekiel's mind, or in the thought of his school, the marvelous fertility of Eden must originate in the Temple on Zion? Could he believe that any fecundity in the east, which God has left in order to return to the Temple (Ezek 43:1–7; 44:1–2), must have its source in the new seat of the divine presence? Perhaps the prophet is telling his Exilic audience that any natural abundance they experience in Babylonia is only an earnest of what is to come when they return to the Land of Israel, where, even the Dead Sea will become an oasis. More likely, his stress on Eden traditions in his description of Zion is a way of reorienting thought to lie, to the west, the direction of Israel's future.¹¹⁷⁰

Ezekiel's exilic audience who participated in the Babylonian New Year Festival must have observed how the Babylonians designed their city as the cosmic center. Ezekiel challenges his audiences to reconsider the meaning of the Garden of Eden. Fernando Segovia emphasizes that,

¹¹⁶⁷ Stephanie Dalley, *The Mystery of the Hanging Garden of Babylon: An Elusive World Wonder Traced* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

¹¹⁶⁸ Dalley, *Hanging Garden*, 18.

¹¹⁶⁹ Van Seters, "Creation of Man," 339; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 172.

¹¹⁷⁰ Levenson, *Theology of the Program*, 32.

from a postcolonial perspective, interpreters should take into consideration the voice of the margins “in the light of its own view of the ‘world’ and life in that world.”¹¹⁷¹ With regard to Nebuchadnezzar’s imperial ideology, Hanspeter Schaudig argues that when Nebuchadnezzar built his palace and temple at Babylon, his imperial ideology was clear: “one god—one king—one temple—one palace.”¹¹⁷² Ezekiel’s exilic audiences at the margins must have followed the Neo-Babylonian Empire’s ideology. However, against Nebuchadnezzar’s imperial ideology, Ezekiel announces that even Nebuchadnezzar will be expelled out of his city Babylon because of his wrongdoing and iniquity. He further points out that the Garden of Eden is not the city Babylon where Marduk dominates, but the Temple where YHWH dwells.

5.6. The Fifth Oracular Account Concerning Sidon and the Restoration of Israel (Ezek 28:20-26)

5.6.1. Translation and Critical notes

²⁰ and the word of YHWH came to me, saying

²¹ Ben Adam. Set your face against Sidon and prophesy against her.

²² and you shall say, thus says the LORD¹¹⁷³ YHWH

Behold! I am against you, O Sidon. And I will gain glory in your midst

And they shall know¹¹⁷⁴ that I am YHWH, when I work judgments in her and show my holiness through her.

¹¹⁷¹ Segovia, *Biblical Criticism*, 38.

¹¹⁷² Schaudig, *Cult Centralization*, 159.

¹¹⁷³ LXX omits the LORD.

¹¹⁷⁴ LXX reads it as καὶ γνώσῃ “and you (second singular pronoun) shall know.”

²³ and I will send against her¹¹⁷⁵; pestilence and blood in her streets¹¹⁷⁶ and the slain shall fall¹¹⁷⁷ in her midst¹¹⁷⁸ by the sword¹¹⁷⁹ that is against her from all sides

And they shall know that I am YHWH.

²⁴ and the house of Israel shall no longer have a pricking brier¹¹⁸⁰ and a thorn causing pain from all¹¹⁸¹ their neighbors who despise¹¹⁸² them

And they shall know that I am the LORD¹¹⁸³ YHWH.

²⁵ Thus says the LORD¹¹⁸⁴ YHWH,

When I gather the house¹¹⁸⁵ of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and show my holiness through them in the sight of the nations.

And they shall *dwell* on their own soil that I gave to My servant Jacob.

²⁶ and they shall *dwell* upon it *in security*. And they shall build houses and plant vineyards, and shall *dwell in security*,

when I execute judgments against all their neighbors who despise them.

¹¹⁷⁵ LXX omits the LORD.

¹¹⁷⁶ LXX reads it as ἐν ταῖς πλατείαις σου “in your streets.”

¹¹⁷⁷ The Hebrew word נָפַל “fall” is Pilel waw consecutive perfect third masculine singular form (BDB, 656). But some manuscripts, LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate versions render it as נָפַל “fall” Qal perfect third masculine singular form. Zimmerli argues that the Hebrew word נָפַל is a scribal error for נָפַל. See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 96.

¹¹⁷⁸ LXX omits this part.

¹¹⁷⁹ The BHS critical apparatus recommends reading בְּחֶרֶב “by the sword” as וְחֶרֶב “and the sword.”

¹¹⁸⁰ The Hebrew noun טְלוֹן “pricking brier” occurs twice in the book of Ezekiel (2:6; 28:24).

¹¹⁸¹ LXX omits the Hebrew word כָּל “all.”

¹¹⁸² The Hebrew verb שָׂט “treat with despise” occurs three times in the book of Ezekiel (16:57; 28:24, 26).

¹¹⁸³ Cairo Geniza manuscript, some MT manuscripts, and LXX versions delete “the LORD.”

¹¹⁸⁴ LXX omits the LORD.

¹¹⁸⁵ LXX omits the Hebrew noun בֵּית “the house.” Some manuscripts replace it as בָּנֵי “sons of.”

And they shall know that I am the LORD their God.

5.6.2. Structure

I.	Ezekiel's Announcement of Judgment oracle against Sidon	Ezek 28:20–23
A.	Ezekiel's account of YHWH's instruction	20–21
1.	Prophetic word formula	20
2.	YHWH's instruction	21–22α ⁸
a.	Ben Adam	21α ¹⁻²
b.	Set your face against Sidon	21α ³⁻⁶
c.	Prophesy against her	21b
B.	Prophetic Announcement of Judgment against Sidon	22–23
1.	Prophetic messenger formula	22α ¹⁻⁵
2.	YHWH's first direct address against Sidon	22α ⁶⁻¹⁰
a.	Behold! I am against you, O Sidon	22α ⁶⁻⁸
b.	I will gain glory in your midst	22α ⁹⁻¹⁰
c.	Recognition formula	22bα ¹⁻⁴
3.	YHWH's second indirect address against Sidon (Expansion)	22bα ⁵⁻²³
a.	When I execute judgments against her	22bα ⁵⁻⁷
b.	I will show my holiness against her	22bα ⁸⁻⁹
c.	I will send against her: Pestilence, blood sword in her streets	23α ¹⁻⁵
d.	Result of YHWH's judgment (third person singular subject)	23α ⁶⁻¹¹
1)	The slain will fall in her midst by the sword	23α ⁶⁻⁹
2)	Against her from all sides	23α ¹⁰⁻¹¹
e.	Recognition formula	23b
II.	Oracle of Salvation for Israel (First Appendix): Prophetic Proof Saying	24
A.	No more painful pricking brier or thorn to the House of Israel from the nations	24a
B.	Recognition formula	24b
III.	Oracle of Salvation for Israel (Second Appendix): Prophetic Proof Saying	25–26
A.	Prophetic messenger formula	25α ¹⁻⁴
B.	Announcement of YHWH's restoration of the House of Israel	25α ^{5-26bα⁶}
1.	YHWH's direct address to Israel	25α ⁵⁻¹⁷
a.	When I gather the House of Israel from the peoples	25α ⁵⁻¹³
b.	I will show my holiness through them in the sight of the nations	25α ¹⁴⁻¹⁷
2.	Restoration of Israel	25b–26bα ⁶
a.	They shall dwell on their own soil that I gave to my servant Jacob	25b
b.	They shall dwell upon it in security	26α ¹⁻³
c.	They shall build house and plant vineyards	26α ⁴⁻⁷
d.	They shall dwell upon it in security	26α ⁸⁻⁹
3.	YHWH's direct judgment against nations	26bα ¹⁻⁶
C.	Recognition formula (added their God)	26bα ⁷⁻¹¹

Ezek 28:20–26 is demarcated at the outset by the prophetic word formula, “and the word of YHWH came to me, saying” in v. 20, followed by two prophetic messenger formulae (vv. 22a¹⁻⁵, 25a¹⁻⁴) and four recognition formulae (vv. 22b¹⁻⁴, 23b, 24b, 26b⁷⁻¹¹). It begins with the prophetic word formula in v. 20, followed by YHWH’s instruction to Ezekiel as Ben Adam (vv. 20–21). The instruction begins in v. 21 with twofold imperatives to “set your face against Sidon” in v. 21a³⁻⁶; “to prophesy against Sidon” in v. 21b. The oracle consists of two major sections because of two prophetic messenger formulae (vv. 22a¹⁻⁵, 25a¹⁻⁴): the first major section concerning the prophetic judgment oracle against Sidon and Israel’s neighbors (vv. 22–24) and the second major section concerning Israel’s restoration (vv. 25–26). The two major sections also consist of three subunits because of three recognition formulae (23b, 24b, 26b⁷⁻¹¹) as conclusions for each oracle: the first subunit (vv. 22a¹⁻⁵–23), the second subunit (v. 24), and the third subunit (vv. 25–26).

The first subunit of the oracle concerning YHWH’s judgment against Sidon appears in vv. 22a¹⁻⁵–23. It comprises two-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYINGS which are followed by two recognition formulae (vv. 22b¹⁻⁴, 23b): YHWH’s first direct address against Sidon (vv. 22a⁶⁻¹⁰), YHWH’s second indirect address against Sidon (vv. 22b⁵–23). YHWH’s first direct address against Sidon (vv. 22a⁶⁻¹⁰) begins with the Hebrew particle interjection *hinneh* with the first person common singular pronominal suffix, “Behold! I am against you, Sidon,” which is a so-called duel formula.¹¹⁸⁶ Unlike the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:19, it has no “because (כִּי) PN (nation) did something, therefore (לָכֵן), I will do...” pattern. Rather, it indicates the SELF-DISCLOSURE ORACLE, “and I will gain glory in your midst” in v. 22a⁹⁻¹⁰. The last element of

¹¹⁸⁶ Hals, *Ezekiel*, 201; Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1397.

YHWH's first direct address against Sidon (vv. 22a⁶⁻¹⁰) ends with the recognition formula in v. 22b¹⁻⁴. YHWH's second indirect address against Sidon in vv. 22b⁵-23 begins with the Qal construct infinitive suffix first common singular form with the Hebrew preposition *בְּעִשְׂוֹתַי* "when I work judgments in her." But in contrast to the MT reading of 22b⁵, the LXX reading is "when I work judgments in you." Since it transforms from YHWH's direct address to indirect address, Zimmerli argues that YHWH's second direct address (vv. 22b⁵-23) is an expansion by later editors.¹¹⁸⁷ On the other hand, Greenberg observes that YHWH's indirect address connotes the change of addressee from Sidon to Ezekiel's real audience.¹¹⁸⁸ Indeed, v. 22 ends with another SELF-DISCLOSURE ORACLE, "and I will show my holiness through her," which announces YHWH's holiness for the community of the exiles through the downfall of Sidon. Verse 23 continues YHWH's indirect address for the community of the exiles as well. It introduces the three-fold stereo-typed formulaic language of the plagues "pestilence, blood, and sword" against Sidon.¹¹⁸⁹ It is formulated in the third person singular form, "the slain shall fall in her midst by the sword that is against her from all sides." By ending with the recognition formula in 23b, the first subunit concludes.

The second subunit of the oracle concerning YHWH's judgment against Sidon and Israel's neighbors appears in v. 24. The Hebrew conjunction *וְ* "and" connects v. 24 with the previous oracle against Sidon. This indicates that the house of Israel shall no longer be afflicted as a result of the downfall of Sidon.¹¹⁹⁰ As Katheryn Darr points out, it is significant that while

¹¹⁸⁷ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 97.

¹¹⁸⁸ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37*, 595.

¹¹⁸⁹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 98.

¹¹⁹⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 142.

the oracle against Sidon does not include YHWH's accusations in detail, v. 24 introduces Israel's neighbors as "a pricking brier or a thorn" who despised the Israelites.¹¹⁹¹ Presumably, like Israel's neighbors, Sidon also treated Israel with contempt. In the end of v. 24, the second subunit of the oracle concludes with the recognition formula, which underscores the realization of YHWH's punishment against nations.

The third and final subunit of the oracle in 28:25–26 presents the restoration of Israel. It begins with the prophetic messenger formula in v. 25a¹⁻⁴. Many critics argue that vv. 25–26 also reflect a later expansion by Ezekiel's disciples because the content of vv. 25–26 includes material and expressions in chapters 33–39 (cf. 34:25–30; 39:25–29).¹¹⁹² However, Greenberg argues that "vv. 21–24 make punishment of the gentiles the vindication of God's honor, vv. 25–26 achieved that vindication by the wonderful restoration of Israel."¹¹⁹³ Indeed, at the outset, v. 25a⁵⁻¹³ anticipate the return of the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered. In v. 25a¹⁴⁻¹⁷, the restoration of Israel vindicates YHWH's holiness. Especially, the literary sequence in v. 22b⁵⁻⁹ follows the literary sequence in vv. 25a⁵⁻¹⁷: A (v. 22b⁵⁻⁷: When I execute judgments against her) – B (v. 22b⁸⁻⁹: I will show my holiness through her) // A' (v. 25a⁵⁻¹³: When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples) – B' (v. 25a¹⁴⁻¹⁷: I will show my holiness through them). This indicates that vv. 25–26 are closely connected with vv. 22–23. It is significant that vv. 25b–26a⁹ reiterates the Hebrew verb יָשַׁב "dwell" three times. Allen argues that the reiteration of the Hebrew verb יָשַׁב "dwell" echoes the oracles against Tyre in vv. 1–

¹¹⁹¹ Darr, "Ezekiel," 1397.

¹¹⁹² Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 398; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 100; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 126.

¹¹⁹³ Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37*, 597.

19.¹¹⁹⁴ Indeed, while the Tyrian prince dwells in the seat of God in the heart of the seas in Ezek 28:2, vv. 25b–26a⁹ portray the promise that the Israelites will dwell on their own soil that YHWH gave to Jacob. Thus, it is observed that vv. 25–26 are closely related to the previous oracle against the Tyrian king. Furthermore, verse 25b “they shall dwell on their own soil that I gave to my servant Jacob” functions as an introduction for the restoration of Israel in vv. 25b–26b⁶, followed by an *inclusio*: A (v. 26a¹⁻³; “they shall dwell upon it in security”), B (v. 26a⁴⁻⁷; they shall build house and plant vineyards), A’ (v. 26a⁸⁻⁹; “they shall dwell upon it in security.”) The *inclusio* in v. 26a¹⁻⁹ highlights the rebuilding of the house and vineyards for the Israelites in v. 26a⁴⁻⁷. Verse 26b¹⁻⁶ “when I execute judgments against all their neighbors who despise them” includes the elements in the previous subunits: “when I execute judgments against her” in v. 22b⁵⁻⁷ and “all their neighbors who despise them” in v. 24a. This indicates vv. 20–26 as a literary unit. As a final conclusion for the Tyrian oracles (26:1–28:26), v. 26b⁷⁻¹¹ concludes with the recognition formula.

5.6.3. Genre

Ezek 28:20–26 is formulated as a series of two-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYINGS.¹¹⁹⁵ According to Zimmerli, the simplest form of this genre consists of a PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUNISHMENT with THE RECOGNITION FORMULA.¹¹⁹⁶ Hals defines this genre as the two-part

¹¹⁹⁴ Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 98.

¹¹⁹⁵ Like other critics, Hals argues that a later editor added 28:20-26 to make a total of seven oracles in Ezek 25-32. Thus, he asserts that the present form of PROPHETIC PROOF SAYINGS seems a rather clumsy. See Hals, *Ezekiel*, 202.

¹¹⁹⁶ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25-48*, 38–39; Hals, *Ezekiel*, 31.

PROOF SAYING.¹¹⁹⁷ While Ezek 26:2–6 is a three-part PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING, Ezek 28:20–26 is a series of PROPHETIC PROOF SAYINGS because of the absence of “because (כִּי) PN (nation) did something, therefore (לָכֵן), I will do...” pattern. As we discussed above, Ezek 28:20–26 includes four RECOGNITION FORMULAE (vv. 22b^{α1-4}, 23b, 24b, 26b^{α7-11}). Each PROPHETIC PROOF SAYING for each RECOGNITION FORMULA not only announces YHWH’s judgment against Sidon and Israel’s neighbors in vv. 22–24, but also anticipates the restoration of the Israelites in vv. 25–26. Their primary goal is to reveal “YHWH’s glory (v. 22a^{α9-10})” and “YHWH’s holiness (vv. 22b^{α8-9}, 25a^{α14-17}).”

5.6.4. Setting

Like the previous oracle against the Tyrian king (Ezek 28:1–19), it is difficult to assume the historical setting of Ezek 28:20–26 because of the absence of the chronological formula. Above all, it does not include specific motives why YHWH decided to execute his judgment against Sidon. If so, why did Ezekiel include the oracle against Sidon (28:20–26) after the Tyrian oracles (26:1–28:19)? Perhaps, as Joseph Blenkinsopp points out, “Sidon was included simply because it is generally linked with Tyre in prophetic invective” (Isa 23:1–14; Jer 25:22; Joel 3:4; Zech 9:2).¹¹⁹⁸ Most interpreters agree that Ezekiel added the oracle against Sidon because the OAN (Ezek 25–32) is dominated by the number seven, which is related to seven nations to be destroyed in Deuteronomy 7:1.¹¹⁹⁹ Above all, they insist that in Jer 27:3, in Zedekiah’s reign,

¹¹⁹⁷ Hals, *Ezekiel*, 31.

¹¹⁹⁸ Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 125.

¹¹⁹⁹ Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 396; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 3; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 4–5, 122–23; Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1396.

emissaries from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon visited Jerusalem because they planned a rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar.¹²⁰⁰ Since the Neo-Babylonian Empire is YHWH's instrument, Sidon's military opposition to Nebuchadrezzar would be the primary reason why Ezekiel included the oracle against Sidon.

With regard to the Phoenician city of Sidon, the Greek geographer Strabo reports Sidon to be one of the most ancient of the Phoenician cities, situated on the east Mediterranean coast about twenty-five miles north of Tyre.¹²⁰¹ In a Hittite incantation from early in the 14th century BCE, Sidon was a stronger place than Tyre.¹²⁰² According to H. Jacob Katzenstein, in the El-Amarna letter 114, Ribadi, king of Byblos, complains bitterly about an act of piracy by ships from Sidon.¹²⁰³ Especially, the El-Amarna letters indicate that the king of Sidon was a leader of the anti-Egyptian camp, while he conquered Ushu (Old Tyre), which provided drinking water or wood for fuel and building for the inhabitants of Tyre.¹²⁰⁴ However, in the reign of Ethbaal or Ithobaal I (887–856 BCE), Tyre became “the mother of the Sidonians.”¹²⁰⁵ Ethbaal even called himself “king of the Sidonians” (cf. 1 Kgs 16:31). Maria Eugenia Aubet explains why Ethbaals uses such a title as follows:

The new title assumed by the kings of Tyre is the result of the expansionist intentions of Ithobaal, who was to succeed in re-establishing his dominion over all the southern

¹²⁰⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 98; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 125; Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 99; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 122; Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1396.

¹²⁰¹ Philip C. Schmitz, “Sidon (Place),” *ABD*, 6:17–18.

¹²⁰² Schmitz, “Sidon,” 18.

¹²⁰³ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 33.

¹²⁰⁴ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 42.

¹²⁰⁵ Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 115.

territory of Phoenicia. Ithobaal created a single state that embraced both Tyre and Sidon. From that moment until the end of the eighth century BCE, this new territorial confederation, with its capital in Tyre, would be governed by the royal house of Tyre. Proof that there was a single state of Tyre-Sidon in the ninth and eighth centuries BCE. – ‘the united kingdom of Canaan’ mentioned by Isaiah (23:1–14) – is the fact that during that time Sidon disappears from the Assyrian inscriptions and that the two cities develop one single polity under the sovereignty of a single monarch residing in Tyre.¹²⁰⁶

Indeed, while Tyrian kings could develop their economic status during the Assyrian period, Sidon was often conquered by the Assyrian kings. In 701 BCE, Luli or Elulaios king of Sidon was forced to flee to Kition because he rebelled against the Assyrian king Sennacherib.¹²⁰⁷ On the other hand, Sennacherib did not conquer Tyre, although he waged war against a number of Phoenician cities.¹²⁰⁸ In 676 BCE, Esarhaddon captured and completely destroyed Sidon because Abdi-Milkūti king of Sidon refused to submit.¹²⁰⁹ Esarhaddon renamed Sidon as “Quay of Esarhaddon or Kar-esarhaddon” and carried off the treasures of the palace.¹²¹⁰ According to Zimmerli, despite the harsh action on Sidon, Esarhaddon did not succeed in wiping out Sidon completely.¹²¹¹ The king of Sidon reappears in the list of “The Court of Nebuchadnezzar.”¹²¹² Martin Alonso Corral assumes that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Sidon in order to block the

¹²⁰⁶ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 46.

¹²⁰⁷ Aubet, *Phoenicians*, 59.

¹²⁰⁸ Lipiński, *Skirts of Canaan*, 189.

¹²⁰⁹ Lipiński, *Skirts of Canaan*, 191.

¹²¹⁰ Lipiński, *Skirts of Canaan*, 191; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 97.

¹²¹¹ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 97.

¹²¹² Katzenstein, *History of Tyre*, 325–27.

influence of Egypt on the city.¹²¹³ Indeed, according to Herodotus (2.161), the Egyptian king Apries attacked Sidon and fought a sea-battle against the king of Tyre to prohibit Babylonian control of the area.¹²¹⁴ In the Persian period, although Sidon remained an important administrative center of the empire,¹²¹⁵ Sidon rebelled again. Against their revolt, the Persian king Artaxerxes III Ochus (358–338 BCE.) destroyed Sidon.¹²¹⁶

5.6.5. Intention

Past interpreters have tended to devalue Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon, because they assume that Ezekiel's disciples simply added this text to make Ezekiel's seven oracles against seven nations. Regarding the role of Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon, Walther Eichrodt notes as follows:

The proclamation of disaster for Tyre is large in scale and varied in its literary forms, and concentrates on human self-divinization as the worst sort of apostasy from God. The threat against Sidon that follows it seems brief and uninformative with its commonplace generalities, and *seems an unnecessary piece of padding without any reason for its existence* apart from an external urge to give completeness to the list of the nations to be put under God's judgment.¹²¹⁷

¹²¹³ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 50.

¹²¹⁴ Corral, *Ezekiel's Oracles*, 50.

¹²¹⁵ Schmitz, "Sidon," *ABD*, 6:18.

¹²¹⁶ H. Jacob Katzenstein, "Tyre in the Early Persian Period, 539-486 BCE," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 42 (1979): 32.

¹²¹⁷ Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 396.

However, Eichrodt's statement that Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon seems an unnecessary piece of padding without any reason for its existence is unconvincing. Ezekiel's oracles concerning Sidon and Israel in Ezek 28:20–26 function as a conclusion for the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:26. In particular, as Marvin Sweeney has found that the chronological formulae in the book of Ezekiel introduce the major structural units of the book, he has suggested that “the oracles concerning Sidon and Israel/Jacob in Ezek 28:20–26 must be considered structurally together with the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26–28.”¹²¹⁸ Sweeney has observed that YHWH's judgment against Sidon reveals YHWH's glory and holiness, although it does not include the reason for YHWH's judgment.¹²¹⁹ While Sweeney also connects the restoration of Israel in v. 24 with the downfall of Sidon, he argues that as a result of the downfall of Sidon, the House of Israel will no longer be afflicted.¹²²⁰ Indeed, verse 24 extends the oracle against Sidon to the oracle against Israel's neighbors. More importantly, Sweeney also emphasizes that “the gathering of Israel from the nations to which she has been dispersed and the return of Israel to her own land (vv. 25–26) then serve as the final revelatory acts of the Tyrian oracles that will demonstrate that YHWH is their G-d.”¹²²¹ In this regard, in this intention section, I will argue that while Ezekiel introduces 28:20–26 as a conclusion of the Tyrian oracles to anticipate YHWH's salvation for the Israelites, he uses the texts as the hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire's imperial strategy. It will discuss these two questions. First, while Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon in vv. 22–23 echoes YHWH's self glorification in the Exodus traditions (Ezek 14:4; 17–18), he obliquely announces YHWH's deliverance of the Babylonian exiles from the Neo-Babylonian Empire. By

¹²¹⁸ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 205.

¹²¹⁹ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 209.

¹²²⁰ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 142.

¹²²¹ Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*, 209.

using priestly terms for YHWH's self glorification and holiness, Ezekiel's oracles against Sidon would give hope for the second generation of exiles. Second, Ezekiel intentionally introduces Ezek 28:20–26 to underscore YHWH as a true king among other gods. YHWH's judgments against Sidon and Israel's neighbors allude to Marduk's supremacy over other gods in the Babylonian New Year Festival. In day eight of the Babylonian New Year Festival, the assembly of gods visited to praise Marduk's supremacy. Against their imperial ideology, Ezekiel intentionally introduces the present text (vv. 20–26) to announce YHWH as a true king for the house of Israel. Third, in vv. 25–26 Ezekiel assures the Babylonian diaspora community as the House of Israel that King Josiah's political and religious reform will be realized. Against the Neo-Babylonian Empire's exploitation of their land, the Babylonian diaspora community always hopes for YHWH's restoration, which recalls King Josiah's political and religious reform.

First, while Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon echoes YHWH's glory in the Exodus traditions (Exod 14:4; 17–18), he obliquely announces YHWH's deliverance of the Babylonian exiles from the Neo-Babylonian Empire. As aforementioned, unlike the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:19, Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon has no “because (לְכֵן) PN (nation) did something, therefore (לְכֵן), I will do...” pattern. Rather, it indicates the SELF-DISCLOSURE ORACLE, “and I will gain glory in your midst” in v. 22a⁹⁻¹⁰. Most critics have recognized that the niphal form, נִכְבְּדָהּ “I will gain glory” in v. 22a⁹⁻¹⁰ (cf. Ezek 39:13) echoes the Exodus traditions (Exod 14:4; 17–18).¹²²² The priestly text in Exod 14:4 announces “and I will harden the heart of Pharaoh and he will pursue them and I will gain glory myself through Pharaoh and through all his army and the Egyptians shall know that I am YHWH and they did so.” Exod 14:4–7 also reports that through the defeat of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, YHWH will gain his glory and

¹²²² Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 98; Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 124; Darr, “Ezekiel,” 1397; Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 176.

the Egyptians will recognize YHWH. Nancy R. Bowen also observed that YHWH's judgments against Sidon "pestilence and blood" in 23a α ³⁻⁵ are also used in Egypt (Exod 7:20; 9:3).¹²²³ At the surface level of Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon (Ezek 28:22–23), just as YHWH defeated Pharaoh and his army in order to gain his glory in the priestly source of the Exodus traditions, YHWH also will gain his glory through the defeat of Sidon and the Sidonians will recognize YHWH. Furthermore, as Zimmerli observed, Ezekiel's two priestly terms echo the priestly source in Lev 10:3: "I will gain my glory" in v. 22a α ⁹⁻¹⁰ and "I will show my holiness" in v. 22b α ⁸⁻⁹.¹²²⁴ In Lev 10:3, following the deaths of Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, Moses uses the two priestly terms. Zimmerli explains that "the proof of Yahweh's holiness is a dangerous fire."¹²²⁵ In other words, by using the two priestly terms, Ezekiel announces YHWH's holiness as a dangerous fire against Sidon. However, as we discussed above in the genre section, the Sidonians never invaded the Israelites but allied with Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 27:3). Rather, the image of Sidon functions as a foil for Ezekiel's hidden transcripts against Nebuchadnezzar. The educated Judean elites would easily recognize Ezekiel's intention. Just as YHWH gained his glory through the defeat of Pharaoh and his army at the Red Sea, YHWH will gain his glory through the defeat of Nebuchadnezzar. YHWH's holiness as a dangerous fire will be against Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel's oracles against Sidon would give hope for the second generation of exiles.¹²²⁶

¹²²³ Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 176.

¹²²⁴ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 98.

¹²²⁵ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 98.

¹²²⁶ Thomas Renz argues that the book of Ezekiel received its final shape to function in a specific way for the second generation of exiles. See Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1.

Second, Ezekiel intentionally introduces Ezek 28:20–26 to underscore YHWH as a true king among other gods. Verse 24 introduces Israel’s neighbors as “a pricking brier (סלון) or a thorn (קוץ)” who despised the Israelites. The Hebrew noun סלון “brier” occurs only in Ezek 2:6 and 28:24. As Stephen Garfinkel observes the Babylonian influence on the Hebrew noun סלון “brier,” he suggests that “the Hebrew noun סלון ‘brier’ takes the terms as a collective noun for thorny vegetation or in an even broader sense, as anything bothersome, not specifically a thorn.”¹²²⁷ While Garfinkel interprets “briers surround Ezekiel” as YHWH’s protection for Ezekiel in Ezek 2:6, he explains “a prickling brier” surrounds the House of Israel as a type of thorn Ezek 28:24.¹²²⁸ Block also suggests that it describes “a malignant leprous wound” in Lev. 13:51–52 and 14:44.¹²²⁹ Nancy Bowen explains that “the Hebrew noun קוץ “thorn” is a generic term for a noxious, thorny weed (Gen 3:18; Judg 8:7; Jer 4:3; Hos 10:8) and is modified by a word that describes physical or mental pain.”¹²³⁰ Presumably, Israel’s neighbors as “pricking brier and thorn” physically or mentally hurts the House of Israel. One of the most humiliating of their acts is their contempt against YHWH and his people. Since Ezekiel’s patron deity YHWH could not protect his people, Israel’s neighbors with their gods despised them. However, Ezekiel announces YHWH’s kingship over Israel’s neighbors with the recognition formula.

YHWH’s supremacy over Israel’s neighbors or their deities alludes to Marduk’s supremacy over other gods in the Babylonian New Year Festival. As we discussed above, the image of the Tyrian king in Ezek 28:11–19 alludes to the Babylonian king’s reenthronement in

¹²²⁷ Stephen Garfinkel, “Of Thistles and Thorns: A New Approach to Ezekiel 2:6,” *VT* 37 (1987): 429.

¹²²⁸ Garfinkel, “Of Thistles and Thorns,” 429.

¹²²⁹ Block, *Ezekiel* 25–48, 126.

¹²³⁰ Bowen, *Ezekiel*, 176.

the Babylonian New Year Festival. Ezekiel condemns the Babylonian king's divine authority behind the image of the Tyrian king. He criticizes the Babylonian king's humiliation ceremony before the statue of Marduk. According to Julie Bidmead, following the Babylonian king's humiliation ceremony, in day eight of the Babylonian New Year Festival, Marduk is proclaimed a supreme king of gods.¹²³¹ This literary sequence enables us to understand why the present text (vv. 20–26) is located after the oracles against the Tyrian king (vv. 1–19). Bidmead notes Marduk's proclamation as a supreme king among other gods in the New Year Festival as follows:

The first decreeing of destinies takes place in the Ezida, the shrine of Nabû in the Esagila, which had been previously ritually purified. Marduk is led into this shrine of destiny where all the other gods have gathered. Here he is proclaimed all powerful and invested with supreme authority. This first decreeing of the destinies is focused on Marduk, and presumably the king. The decreeing of the destinies was a significant event in the New Year Festival. At the first decreeing of destinies held in Nabû's *ubšukkinna*, Marduk gathers with the other gods where he is proclaimed almighty and invested with supreme authority.¹²³²

During the procession of the gods and goddesses, the Babylonians transferred the processional boats on water to the *bīt akīti*.¹²³³ Marduk and the king appeared as masters of ceremonies.¹²³⁴ Marduk as a supreme king in the festival is a kind of the dominant's public transcripts. With regard to the function of festival or ritual, James C. Scott argues that “ritual subservience reliably extracted from inferiors signals quite literally that there is no realistic choice other than

¹²³¹ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 113.

¹²³² Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 108–09.

¹²³³ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 116.

¹²³⁴ Bidmead, *Akitu Festival*, 116.

compliance.” Ezekiel defies Marduk’s supremacy over other gods. In v. 24, Ezekiel acknowledges YHWH’s supremacy over other gods, including Marduk.

Third, in vv. 25–26, Ezekiel assures the Babylonian diaspora community as the House of Israel that King Josiah’s political and religious reform will be realized. As we discussed in the intention section of Ezek 27, Ezekiel is influenced by King Josiah’s program of religious reform and national restoration.¹²³⁵ Especially, in vv. 25–26, YHWH’s restoration of the House of Israel recalls King Josiah’s political and religious reform. Verse 25 begins with the messenger formula and anticipates that YHWH will gather the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered. It also highlights that YHWH will show his holiness through them before nations. It portrays that YHWH will let them dwell on their own soil that he gave to his servant Jacob. With regard to the patriarch Jacob in v. 25, Marvin Sweeney argues that v. 25 identifies Jacob as the ancestor to whom the land was promised (Gen 28:13–15; 35:10–12) with the northern kingdom of Israel.¹²³⁶ He also asserts that “the oracle recalls the early years of Josiah’s reform when the Judean king sought to restore Davidic rule over the territory and people of the former northern kingdom of Israel.”¹²³⁷ Although King Josiah’s plans could not be realized because he was killed by the Egyptian king Neco II in 609 BCE, Ezekiel anticipates that King Josiah’s political and religious reform will be realized through YHWH’s kingship and his protection for his people.

Above all, the message of v. 26 is given for the Babylonian diaspora community who lost their land and remembers their peaceful time. In v. 26, Ezekiel emphasizes that the House of Israel will dwell in security and will build houses and plant vineyards. Many critics argue that v.

¹²³⁵ Sweeney, *King Josiah of Judah*, 139; Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 15.

¹²³⁶ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 142.

¹²³⁷ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 142.

26 is fully developed in 34:25, 27; 38:8, 11, 14; 39:26.¹²³⁸ It is significant that in Ezek 38-39, after the defeat of Gog which symbolizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire, the whole House of Israel will realize his holy name and dwell in their land in security. Likewise, Ezek 28:20-26 depicts that the downfall of Sidon which symbolizes that the downfall of Neo-Babylonia will bring the restoration of the House of Israel. In other words, the message of v. 26 reflects the Babylonian diaspora community's future restoration after the downfall of their ultimate enemy, Neo-Babylonia. Regarding the effect of diaspora, Sugirtharajah argues that dispersed peoples tried to forge their shared memory and history, while at the same time acknowledging that not all diasporas are the same.¹²³⁹ By recalling King Josiah's political and religious restoration period, Ezekiel assures that YHWH will restore his diaspora community in Babylonia.

5.7. Summary

In this chapter, I have investigated the Tyrian oracles in Ezek 26:1–28:26, in which Ezekiel appropriates mythological texts as his hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Interpreters have considered that Ezekiel as a pro-Babylonian portrays Nebuchadnezzar as YHWH's instrument. Thus, they have also suggested two reasons. First, since king Nebuchadnezzar's political aim was the supremacy of the Levant, Ezekiel announced Nebuchadnezzar's attack against Tyre. Second, Ezekiel criticizes Tyre's gloating over the downfall of Jerusalem, since Tyre plotted rebellion with Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar in 595/594 BCE (Jer 27:3). Nevertheless, Ezekiel's unfulfilled prophecy regarding

¹²³⁸ Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, 398; Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 100; Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 126.

¹²³⁹ Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 184.

Nebuchadrezzar's unsuccessful siegework of Tyre in Ezek 29:17–21 has baffled scholars. Did Ezekiel's announcement of YHWH's judgment fail? Ezekiel intentionally introduces Nebuchadrezzar's attack in Ezekiel 26 and his unsuccessful siegework of Tyre in Ezek 29:17–21 in order to highlight YHWH's supremacy. On the surface, Ezek 26:7–14 reflects Nebuchadrezzar's attack in detail. But it alludes to the epithet “king of kings” for the Assyrian kings and their attack against Tyre in the period of Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. Ezekiel mimics the Assyrian traditions to describe Nebuchadrezzar's conquest of Tyre. But when we compare Ezek 26:7–14 with Ezek 29:17–21, Ezekiel mocks Nebuchadrezzar's failure to take spoils from Tyre. More importantly, by introducing mythological elements such as “deep” and “many waters” in Ezek 26:19–21, Ezekiel highlights YHWH's supremacy over Marduk. Although Nebuchadrezzar's attack against Tyre failed, YHWH will ultimately defeat Tyre.

In Ezek 27, while Ezekiel describes Tyre as a ship from his priestly perspective, he criticizes the Neo-Babylonian Empire's imperial strategy. When Ezekiel portrays the Tyrian ship, he uses the Hebrew phrase *כְּלִילַת יָפִי* “perfected in beauty,” which was used for the building materials for the Jerusalem Temple in Ezek 16. In Ezekiel 16, Ezekiel emphasizes that Jerusalem as woman was perfected in beauty because her fame was bestowed as YHWH's gift. But in the last part of Ezekiel 16, he announces that she will be punished because of her ignorance. Likewise, in Ezekiel 27, the Tyrian ship boasts of its beauty because of its builders. But in Ezek 27:26b, YHWH's east wind destroys the Tyrian ship. The Tyrian ship alludes to a processional ship of Marduk in the Neo-Babylonian New Year Festival. One of the most important imperial strategies for the Neo-Babylonian Empire was to underscore Babylon as the center of the world. The processional ship of Marduk which symbolizes Marduk's victory over the chaos, Tiamat, was laid with precious materials. In this regard, by using the metaphor as the

Tyrian ship, Ezekiel criticizes the processional ship of Marduk. YHWH's east wind will defeat the processional ship as chaos. Furthermore, by locating Judah and the land of Israel in the center of the trading list in Ezek 27:17, Ezekiel describes Jerusalem as the main religious and trading center during the period of religious and political reform led by King Josiah (640–609 BCE). By evoking the restoration period by King Josiah, Ezekiel accentuates the fact that the center of the world is not Babylon, but Judah and the land of Israel.

In Ezek 28:1–19, from his priestly perspective, Ezekiel obliquely criticizes the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar through the image of the Tyrian king. Based upon Irene J. Winter's argument, Mesopotamian kings constantly maintained their divine kingship as the god's representatives on earth. The Tyrian king's self-deification alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's royal self-promotion in the Wadi Brisa inscription and his portrayal as the sun-god in a legal text. The Tyrian king's dwelling place in the midst of the waters also alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's palace and temple in Babylon. Extra biblical sources such as Herodotus's report and the Babylonian world-map tablet depict that Babylon as the center was surrounded by the sea. In Ezek 28:11–19, Ezekiel portrays the Tyrian king from his priestly perspective. The Tyrian king as a cherub functions as a guardian or an executor for YHWH. But since the Tyrian king defiled his sanctuaries, Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest announces YHWH's acts of purgation against the Tyrian king. Behind the image of the Tyrian king, Ezekiel criticizes Nebuchadnezzar as *mušḫuššu*. Like the cherub in the Hebrew Bible, Mesopotamians typically describe *mušḫuššu* as a guardian for Marduk. Although Nebuchadnezzar functions as YHWH's instrument, his destiny will be similar to the Tyrian king because he also defiled YHWH's sanctuaries. The Tyrian king's excommunication out of his temple also alludes to the Babylonian king's humiliation ritual in the Babylonian New Year Festival. Although according to the tradition of Atrahasis the Babylonian

king is described as being created a superior person by the gods, the king should undergo the humiliation ritual in the New Year Festival. Ezekiel mimics his humiliation behind the image of the Tyrian king. Moreover, Ezekiel resists Nebuchadrezzar's imperial plan for Babylon as the cosmic center. He emphasizes that the Garden of Eden is not the city Babylon where Marduk dominates, but the Temple where YHWH dwells.

In the last part of the Tyrian oracles, while Ezekiel introduces 28:20–26 as a conclusion of the Tyrian oracles to anticipate YHWH's salvation for the Israelites, he uses vv. 20–26 as the hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire's imperial strategy. By introducing the priestly traditions in Exodus 14, Ezekiel's oracle against Sidon evokes YHWH's deliverance and His self-glorification from Pharaoh. YHWH's self-glorification (v. 22a⁹⁻¹⁰) and his holiness (v. 22b⁸⁻⁹) in his oracle against Sidon also evokes YHWH's dangerous fire in Lev 10. The image of Sidon functions as a foil for Ezekiel's hidden transcripts against Nebuchadrezzar. Furthermore, YHWH's kingship among Israel's neighbors alludes to Marduk's kingship among other gods in the New Year Festival. Ezekiel resists Marduk's supremacy over other gods. In vv. 25–26, Ezekiel assures the diaspora community in Babylonia as the House of Israel that King Josiah's political and religious reform will be realized.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary

In this study, I have argued that Ezekiel as “resistance literature” intentionally uses Mesopotamian traditions as hidden transcripts to resist the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Since Ezekiel dwelled at the banks of the river Chebar in Babylon, he could not overtly criticize the Neo-Babylonian Empire. But Ezekiel as an educated Zadokite priest was clearly familiar with Mesopotamian literature during his exile. By using Mesopotamian traditions, Ezekiel not only highlighted YHWH’s kingship, but also resisted the Neo-Babylonian Empire’s imperial strategy.

In chapter two, I have explained the methodologies of this dissertation regarding Marvin Sweeney’s form criticism, James C. Scott’s hidden transcripts, and postcolonial biblical criticism. Since Hermann Gunkel’s examination of the short, self-contained units of texts, form criticism has developed. According to Marvin Sweeney’s form critical methodology, it first examines the final form of the text based upon the synchronic analysis. Then, it also diachronically analyzes the compositional history of the text. As it considers the intertextuality of the text, it examines the texts macro-levels. I applied his suggestions to the analysis of the Tyrian oracles (26:1-28:26). In order to understand Ezekiel’s resistance against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, I introduced James C. Scott’s hidden transcripts. The dominant continuously produce their public transcripts to govern the dominated. Their public transcripts can culminate in parades or inaugurations, processions, and coronations. The Babylonian *akitu* New Year Festival provided a logical place to use the public transcripts. Although the dominated cannot directly condemn the dominant, they can produce well cooked hidden transcripts to resist the public transcripts offstage. Ezekiel’s primary purpose for using hidden transcripts for the Judean exiles

is to announce YHWH's kingship in the new Temple. I also examined postcolonial biblical criticism. In Bhabha's terminology, Ezekiel is a mimic who reveals his hybridity. Ezekiel as a Zadokite priest was also acculturated into Babylonian society. He imitates the culture of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which uses "mimicry" as a skill that presents messages that are — "almost the same but not quite." On the surface, Ezekiel's mimicry seems not to be resistant to the Neo-Babylonian Empire. However, as Bhabha emphasizes, it menaces "the narcissistic demand of colonial authority."

In chapter three, I have examined the relationship between Sumerian literature and the book of Ezekiel. Sumerian scribes composed the Curse of Agade, the Cuthean Legend, and five Sumerian city laments to legitimize their kingship. Sumerian elites criticized Naram-Sin, the grandson of Sargon of Akkade (2254–2218 BCE) in the CA and the Cuthean Legend since he destroyed Ekur, the sanctuary for Enlil. Their primary purpose is political propaganda for the Ur III dynasty. While the CA and the Cuthean Legend demonstrate *Unheilsherrscher* as an evil king who causes disaster because of his impious behavior, the five Sumerian city laments reshaped the CA to legitimize Išme-Dagan, king of the Isin dynasty (1953–1935 BCE). In particular, the Nippur lament among the five city laments is similar to the overall literary sequence of the book of Ezekiel: 1) destruction by a storm god, 2) assignment of responsibility, 3) divine abandonment, 4) the weeping goddess, 5) destruction of the Temple, and 6) restoration. Dobbs-Allsopp insists that in contrast to Enlil's destruction that occurred after Naram-Sin's sacrilege in the Curse of Agade, Enlil's destruction is arbitrary in the Sumerian city laments. However, the Uruk lament also introduces the sin of human beings. Above all, the sixth thematic feature is involved in the role of the king in a restored temple in Ezek 40–48. For example, 𒌶𒍪𒍪 "prince" as a king (Ezek 44:3) has affinities with Išme-Dagan as Enlil's agent who fulfilled the restoration of

the city. Like Išme-Dagan, 𐎶𐎵𐎲 “prince” brings ritual offerings to YHWH in the restored temple (Ezek 45:22). On the surface, Ezekiel’s theological perspective that YHWH abandoned His own people because of their sin alludes to Sumerian scribes’ political propaganda. However, Ezekiel’s viewpoint is not political propaganda for the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Rather, Ezekiel emphasizes YHWH’s true kingship in the new temple. Reference to King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon occurs only four times in Ezekiel (Ezek 26:7, 18; 29:18, 19; and 30:10). Ezekiel depicts his role as YHWH’s instrument to destroy Tyre and Egypt. But in contrast to Išme-Dagan, Nebuchadrezzar plays no role in rebuilding the new temple in Ezekiel 40–48. Since Ezekiel has in mind a true king, such as YHWH, no specific dynasty existed in the new temple. Thus, in Ezekiel 40–48, instead of using the Hebrew noun מֶלֶךְ “king,” Ezekiel prefers the Hebrew noun 𐎶𐎵𐎲 “prince.” Like Išme-Dagan in the Nippur lament, 𐎶𐎵𐎲 “prince” brings ritual offerings to YHWH.

In chapter four, I have examined the relationship between Akkadian literature and the book of Ezekiel. Assyrian scribes actively used the divine abandonment motif which symbolizes the weakness of the deity for their political propaganda against Babylonians. For Assyrians, Babylonians are extremely uncooperative since they often raised rebels with the support of the Elamites. As Peter Machinist points out, the strategy of Tukulti-Ninurta I is *Kulturkampf*. When the Assyrians conquered the Babylonians, they intentionally appropriated the divine motifs in the Sumerian city laments and vindicated Tukulti-Ninurta I’s attack against Babylon. Eventually, they composed the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic to make Assyria the new center of the Mesopotamian culture. In response to the Epic, Babylonians composed the Babylonian epic of creation, the Enuma Elish, as a counter text. The Poem of Erra, written by Kabti-ilani-Marduk, was used for apotropaics. As Daniel Bodi compares the Poem of Erra with the book of Ezekiel, he argues that

Ezekiel employed several motifs and themes of the Poem of Erra. However, while the Poem of Erra reflects the weakness of Marduk, the book of Ezekiel highlights YHWH's kingship. Like the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic, Esarhaddon's scribes intentionally introduce the divine abandonment motif to vindicate Esarhaddon's kingship. But there is great difference between the Tukulti-Ninurta Epic and the Esarhaddon inscription. In 689 BCE, the Assyrian king Sennacherib destroyed Babylon and usurped the statue of Marduk to his capital Assur. But after the death of Sennacherib, his youngest son Esarhaddon planned to return the statue of Marduk to Babylon. In the inscription of king Esarhaddon, his rebuilding project suggests that Marduk changed his mind and decided to return to Babylon. This sequence resembles Ezekiel's theological structure of the divine presence and absence: the divine presence as the chariot throne vision in Ezekiel 1, the divine absence from the temple of Jerusalem due to its abominations in Ezekiel 8–11, and the divine presence in the new Temple in Ezekiel 40–48. Esarhaddon's strategy for Babylon was intentional. By establishing Babylon as a religious center, the Assyrian king Esarhaddon not only expected Babylonians to assimilate into the Assyrian Empire, but also to pacify rebels in Babylon. The motif of Marduk's absence and return in the inscription of king Esarhaddon helped biblical scholars to understand Ezekiel's theological literature. However, they overlooked the fact that Ezekiel as "resistance literature" appropriates the popular motif of Marduk's absence and his return in the inscription of king Esarhaddon to resist the Babylonian Empire, insofar as the well-known story of Marduk's return reminded Babylonians of their past traumatic events. In particular, the public transcript or the surface of the text in Ezek 1:1–3:15 seems to depict YHWH's mobility as His weakness after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Neo-Babylonians. On the contrary, behind the public transcript, the hidden transcripts of Ezek 1:1–3:15 describe

the portrayal of the *kěvôd* of YHWH as the Assyrian god Assur. YHWH's sovereignty over the world can be compared to the Assyrian god Assur rather than the Babylonian god Marduk.

In chapter five, I have investigated the Tyrian oracles (Ezek 26:1–28:26) by using the form critical method with postcolonial biblical criticism. Based upon Marvin Sweeney's macro-level structure analysis, this study examined the Tyrian oracles including the oracle concerning Sidon, Israel's neighbors and the restoration of Israel/Jacob. It first analyzed the final form of the text. The rhetorical analysis of the final form in the Tyrian oracles indicates that the downfall of Tyre and Sidon brings about the restoration of Israel. Following the structural analysis of the Tyrian oracles, it offered the genre analysis of each text. I found that the Dirge in the Tyrian oracles was influenced by F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp's city laments. But as Hedwig Jahnow points out, the form of dirges in the Tyrian oracles was irregular. Above all, in the setting section, I referred to H. Jacob Katzenstein, Maria Eugenia Aubet, and Martin Alonso Corral's extra-biblical sources to understand Tyre's history and economic status in the ancient Near East.

In the intention section, this study employed James C. Scott's hidden transcripts and postcolonial biblical criticism. I considered why Ezekiel uses Mesopotamian mythological elements to defeat Tyre. Tyre itself is a symbol of strong rock. The name Tyre (צור) also means the Hebrew noun "rock (צור)." Indeed, the thirteen years siege of Tyre could not bring about the defeat of Tyre (571 BCE, Ezek 29:17–21). Eventually, Tyre was conquered in the time of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.¹²⁴⁰ As Carol Newsom points out, Ezekiel's metaphors enable readers to faithfully reconstruct its meaning. From a postbiblical criticism, I found that Ezekiel as

¹²⁴⁰ Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 25–48*, 5. Markus Saur argues that Ezek 26–28 reflects the siege and downfall of the city by the campaign of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. See Markus Saur, "Ezekiel 26–28 and the History of Tyre," *SJOT* 24 (2010): 208–21.

a mimic man appropriates mythological elements for Marduk. From Ezekiel's perspective, Nebuchadnezzar's failure in Ezek 29:17-21 connotes Marduk's weakness. YHWH will ultimately defeat Tyre, the strong enemy, Tyre through "deep" and "many waters" (Ezek 26:19).

It is significant that behind the metaphors for Tyre, Ezekiel resists the Neo-Babylonian Empire's imperial strategies. The Neo Babylonian Empire's elites as the dominant developed their imperial strategies as public transcripts for the dominated. First, the Babylonians announced Marduk's supremacy over other gods, especially the defeated gods, while they transferred a processional ship of Marduk on the waters in the Babylonian New Year Festival. It symbolizes Marduk's defeat of Tiamat as chaos. Auffarth and Laundervill argued that the Tyrian ship in Ezekiel 28 is associated with a processional ship of Marduk in the festival.¹²⁴¹ Indeed, the Tyrian ship with precious materials alludes to a processional ship of Marduk laid with precious stones in the Babylonian New Year Festival. Against their public transcript, Ezekiel announces his hidden transcript in Ezek 27:26b: YHWH's east wind destroys you. Aloysius Fitzgerald meteorologically investigates texts in the Hebrew Bible and argues that YHWH's east wind is related to the effects of the sirocco which brings rain from the sea or dryness from the desert.¹²⁴² However, in Ezek 27:26b and Psalm 48:8, YHWH's east wind does not mean the sirocco. Rather, YHWH's east wind presents His mythological victory over chaos, even Marduk.

Second, the Babylonians emphasized Babylon as the cosmic center of the world. As Vanderhooft points out, the principal imperial interest of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar

¹²⁴¹ Auffarth, *Der Drohende Untergang*, 93–94; Launderville, *Spirit and Reason*, 151–55.

¹²⁴² Aloysius Fitzgerald, *The Lord of the East Wind*, The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph 34 (Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2002), 202–9.

focused on the transformation of Babylon into an imperial megalopolis.¹²⁴³ Since the Assyrian king Sennacherib devastated their temples and palace, Nebuchadnezzar's primary purpose was to rebuild Babylon as the cultural center of the world. In order to rebuild temples and palaces in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar required heavy tributes from other nations. Extra biblical sources such as Herodotus's report and the Babylonian world-map tablet depicts Babylon as the center of the world surrounded by the sea. Throughout the Tyrian oracles, Tyre is depicted in the midst of the sea. In Ezekiel 27, Tyre as the center of the world trade maintains her wealth through her trade and merchandise. Against their public transcript, Ezekiel highlights the center of Judah and the land of Israel in Ezek 27:17. In the trading list of Ezek 27:12–26a, Ezekiel omits Babylon. Rather, he locates Judah and the land of Israel in the center of the list. According to Mario Liverani's analysis of the trading list, the list reflects King Josiah's period. During the period of King Josiah, the economic status of the kingdom of Judah was developed. By evoking the restoration period by King Josiah, Ezekiel accentuates the reality that the center of the world is not Babylon, but Judah and the land of Israel. As Jean-Pierre Ruiz points out, Ezekiel intentionally inverts the Neo-Babylonian ideology, especially "the distinction between the metropolitan center and the conquered subject peripheries."¹²⁴⁴ Moreover, Ezekiel resists Nebuchadnezzar's imperial plan for Babylon as the cosmic center. He emphasizes that the Garden of Eden is not the city Babylon where Marduk dominates, but the Temple where YHWH dwells.

Third, Nebuchadnezzar as Mesopotamian cherub, *mušhuššu* was responsible for guarding Marduk and his temple. Behind the image of the Tyrian king, Ezekiel criticizes Nebuchadnezzar

¹²⁴³ Vanderhooft, *Neo-Babylonian Empire*, 206.

¹²⁴⁴ Ruiz, "Exile's Baggage," 132.

as *mušhuššu*. Like the cherub in the Hebrew Bible, Mesopotamians typically describes *mušhuššu* as a guardian for Marduk. Although Nebuchadnezzar functions as YHWH's instrument, his destiny will be like the Tyrian king because he also defiled YHWH's sanctuaries. The Tyrian king's excommunication out of his temple also alludes to the Babylonian king's humiliation ritual in the Babylonian New Year Festival. Although the Babylonian king is created as a superior person by gods according to the tradition of Atrahasis, the king must submit to the humiliation ritual in the New Year Festival. Ezekiel mimics his humiliation behind the image of the Tyrian king.

Above all, Ezekiel's primary hidden transcript is used against the Neo-Babylonian Empire to highlight YHWH's kingship over other gods. In vv. 20–26 of the Tyrian oracles, Ezekiel introduces the oracle concerning Sidon, Israel's neighbors and the restoration of Israel. In vv. 22, Ezekiel announces that YHWH's judgement against Sidon vindicates YHWH's self-glorification and YHWH's holiness. In the Exodus tradition (Exod 14:4, 17–18), the priestly writer states that through the defeat of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea, YHWH will gain his glory and the Egyptians will recognize YHWH. In a similar vein, Ezekiel uses YHWH's self-glorification through YHWH's judgment against Sidon. Behind the image of Sidon, Ezekiel announces YHWH's deliverance of the second generation of exiles from the Neo-Babylonian Empire. With regard to the patriarch Jacob in v. 25, Marvin Sweeney argues that v. 25 identifies Jacob as the ancestor to whom the land was promised (Gen 28:13–15; 35:10–12) with the northern kingdom of Israel.¹²⁴⁵ He also asserts that “the oracle recalls the early years of Josiah's reform when the Judean king sought to restore Davidic rule over the territory and the people of

¹²⁴⁵ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 142.

the former northern kingdom of Israel.”¹²⁴⁶ Although King Josiah’s plans could not be realized because he was killed by the Egyptian king Neco II in 609 BCE, Ezekiel anticipates that King Josiah’s political and religious reform will be realized through YHWH’s kingship and his protection for his people.

6.2. Further Study

This study contributes to understanding Ezekiel’s hidden transcripts through the combination of form criticism and postcolonial biblical criticism. Although both methodologies have their benefits and flaws, they can complement each other. While form critical analysis of the final written text helps readers to recognize the purpose of Ezekiel’s written speeches for his community, it has its own limits in understanding Ezekiel’s hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Although postcolonial biblical criticism is a helpful tool for understanding how subordinated people resist the dominant, it often ignores diachronic and synchronic approaches to the final form of the text. The combination of form critical methodology and postcolonial biblical criticism offers a fresh reading of the final form of the text.

Above all, as a Korean scholar, I understood Ezekiel’s hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire through the lens of Korean Christians under the Japanese Empire. The Japanese Empire deported hundreds of thousands of Koreans as forced laborers to Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Sonia Ryang’s statistical information, “from 1939 to December 1944, a total of 634,093 male Koreans were brought to Japan to supplement the labor force in various sectors: 320,148 worked in coal mining, 61,409 in metal mining,

¹²⁴⁶ Sweeney, *Reading Ezekiel*, 142.

129,664 in construction and civil engineering, and 122, 872 in manufacturing and machine industries.”¹²⁴⁷ The Japanese Empire even forced Koreans to assimilate into Japanese culture. However, Korean elites who learned the Japanese culture resisted their imperial strategy. For example, DongJu Yun, a Korean Christian poet, studied the English literature at Rikkyo University in Tokyo and transferred to Doshisha University in Kyoto. Although Yun was influenced by Japanese imperial education, he wrote a number of poems as hidden transcripts against the Japanese Empire. One of his most famous poems is “the Prologue,” which is inscribed in a stone monument at Yonsei University as follows:

Wishing not to have

So much as a speck of shame

Toward heaven until the day I die,

I suffered, even when the wind stirred the leaves.¹²⁴⁸

Yun’s emotional expression reflects his sufferings under the Japanese Empire. In the poem, we cannot find his direct criticism against the Japanese Empire. However, he overtly criticizes the Japanese colonial situation: “I suffered, even when the wind stirred the leaves.” Under Japanese imperial rule, Koreans could not express their conscience. Against the Japanese imperial strategy, Yun not only wanted to encourage Koreans to recognize their conscience, but to walk the road with him in order to resist the Japanese imperial strategy. This echoes Ezekiel’s hidden transcripts against the Neo-Bababylonian Empire. The Judean exiles regards Ezekiel as a singer

¹²⁴⁷ Sonia Ryang, *Koreans in Japan: Critical Voices from the Margin* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.

¹²⁴⁸ Dongju Yun, *Sky, Wind, and Stars*, trans. Kyung-nyun Kim Richards and Steffen F. Richards (Fremont: Asian Humanities Press, 2003), 1. The poem is used by permission of Jain Publishing.

of love songs (Ezek 33:32). However, by announcing his laments as hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, Ezekiel wanted his exile community to recognize their conscience and to participate in his resistant movement.

Thus, for the future study of the book of Ezekiel, we need to engage in Ezekiel's hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire in his prophecies. R. S. Sugirtharajah emphasizes the role of interpreters as follows:

What postcolonial biblical criticism has done is to treat texts no longer as moral or spiritual reservoirs, but as a system of codes which interpreters must disentangle in order to reveal the hidden power relations and ideologies lurking in supposedly innocent narratives. Texts were analyzed not to seek spiritual nourishment but to reveal the reactionary and hegemonic values encoded in them — though there may be spiritual nourishment in that.¹²⁴⁹

The overall message of Ezekiel highlights YHWH's kingship over the world and resists the Neo-Babylonian Empire. This study examined the divine motifs and the Tyrian oracles as hidden transcripts against the Neo-Babylonian Empire. If one can see any possibility of Ezekiel's hidden transcripts in his prophecies, the future study of the book of Ezekiel needs to further engage in the final form of the text through the form criticism with postcolonial biblical criticism.

¹²⁴⁹ R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Exploring Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: History, Method, Practice* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 185.

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